

BRIDGING



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

April 2016

From the Minister...

“Creation”

Creativity is simply our ability to dream things up and make them happen. — Peggy Taylor

The word “creation” refers to something that has been created; and our cause-and-effect reasoning mind leads us to try to find a creator wherever we find a creation. So we refer to all of the earth and the universe and everything as “The Creation.” But where did it all come from?

There are stories from many cultures that try to answer that question. There is a story from the aboriginal inhabitants of Australia which tells of how the Great Father of all Spirits aroused the Mother Goddess from her sleep so that she could bring forth life everywhere by walking back and forth over the earth to bring forth trees and vegetation, and then entering deep into the caves of the earth to bring forth all of the other forms of life, including people. The Icelandic people hold that the first three things from which the creation sprang were salt, ice, and fire. And of course the Hebrew Bible tells of how Elohim (one of several names of God in the Bible) brought forth the creation in six days simply by speaking – separating the primeval chaos into land and water and bringing forth the lights in the heavens, creatures of the deep, the earth and the sky, and finally human beings. In this story, we read over and over “God said ... and it was so.”

The story in Genesis says that God made human beings in God’s image – which means that human beings, like God, are also creators. And, indeed, we have been creating ever since. But most of us moderns don’t believe that all of this happened literally around six thousand years ago. On the contrary, we now know that there’s a much longer backstory, going back some billions of years to ... something. We know a great deal about the mechanisms that resulted in the universe as we know it as well as life on this our earth. But like the ancients, we still can’t penetrate to the beginning of all things.

One of the hymns in our teal hymnal takes the words that Paul Gauguin wrote around the edge of his painting to speak of the mystery:

Where do we come from?

What are we?

Where are we going?

Mystery, Mystery, Life is a riddle and a mystery.

And in the meantime, here in the middle between where we came from and where we are going, we are the creators. We have made tools, and dwellings, and civilizations; we have vehicles to travel from the depths of the ocean to the moon and all around the earth; we have created institutions, and all of the arts, and all of the sciences.

We have also come to dominate this small corner of creation, this earth of ours. And our creations – our power plants and cars and jets and industries – are also changing the climate and threatening our future. Earth Day on April 20th is one opportunity for us to consider how we shall create a future here in this creation of which we are stewards.

So our services this month include a blessing of the animals, our nearest companions; Kids to Camp by our Green Sanctuary Committee – which makes sure we’re doing what we can for creation here in our church home; Earth Day; and Passover, a celebration of the creation of the nation of Israel as the people were let out of bondage and given their freedom.

We give thanks for this creation we share and we honor all creators great and small!

In Faith,
Rev. Paul

Minister

Rev. Paul Sprecher

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Worship Services in April

The theme for the month of April is "Creation." The hymn of the month is "Rising Green" – Hymn #1068.

Worship Services:

April 3 – Worship with Rev. Eliza Blanchard: "Blessing of the Animals." Worship Leader: Rev. Rachel Tedesco. Ushers: Bob and Karen Reed Messing. For this service, you are invited to bring your pet. But pets must be restrained... leashed or caged. Your pet's picture or a stuffed animal are also fine as a substitute.

April 10 – Worship with the Green Sanctuary Committee & Natural Resources Trust of North Easton: "Kids to Camp". Lay Worship Leader: Janet Dye; Ushers: Pat & Jack Hart.

April 17 – Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher for Earth Day & New Member Sunday. Lay Worship Leader: Jeff Roop; Ushers: Susan Irish & Stefan Michaud.

April 24 – Worship with Rev. Rachel Tedesco: "Passover: A Bitter-Sweet Holiday" Lay Worship Leader: Tom St. Thomas; Ushers: Eileen Hiney & Frank Yeatman.

Note to Worship Associates, Lay Worship Leaders & Ushers: If you cannot fulfill your role on your assigned date, please let Rev. Rachel know as soon as possible. (And try to find a substitute if you can.) Phone 508-378-3904 (home) or 508-944-6436 (cell) or email her at revrayted@comcast.net.

Announcement about Announcements: Please remember to submit announcements to Jamie by Wednesday at 5 p.m. and write out very short announcements to be made before the service on the lay worship leader's form. Announcements start at 10:25 a.m.

Worship Committee meeting: The next regular meeting of the Worship Committee is Tuesday, April 26 at 7:30 p.m. in the church office. Meetings are open. Church members and friends are cordially invited to attend.

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



I am looking for jobs doing home cleaning, spring cleaning and light personal care.

I have long experience in this area. References available. Call me at 508 697 6360.

Pam Wilson

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 (phone: 781-774-0086).

Your help in protecting his time is appreciated.





LET'S *Grow* TOGETHER

IMPORTANT DATES

April 6	Intergen - Blessing of the Animals
April 10	RE Classes
April 17	RE Classes
April 24	RE Classes Youth Group 5-7

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 2	Holi Festival of Colors at Sri Radha Bakti in Holbrook
April 3	Visit to Lucy Stone Cooperative \$10 per family
April 16	Family Game Night 5-7



FAMILY GAME NIGHT

We plan to host a family game night each month!

Next Family Game Night:
April 16, 5-7 pm



MARCH RECAP

There were so many exciting events in March! The RE Committee hosted "Everybody's Birthday Party," and we had over 30 members and friends attend to celebrate each other's company. The children decorated hollowed out eggs for our egg tree and the Youth Group assisted the teachers. It's great to see children, youth, and adults all working together.

The Youth Group will be meeting once per month on a Sunday evening. We started in March and had so much fun! See you on April 24!

GRADES PRE-K-3

Read the following books in the Picture Book UU Curriculum and discussed how the book connects with Unitarian Universalism:

- Chicken Sunday by Patricia Polacco
- The Spring Equinox by Ellen Jackson

GRADES 4-6

Discussed famous U.U. David Thoreau. This month, the group began to think about themselves as a famous Unitarian Universalist, and how they are changing the world. The group is working on creating a book to collaborate the contributions of the 4-6 grade students!

YOUTH RE

The youth had discussions on social justice topics based off of these songs: You Had To Pick on Me by Matt Kennon; One of These Days by Tim McGraw, and Nothin' Grows in Shadows by Jake Owen.

Time to send some "KIDS TO CAMP"!!!

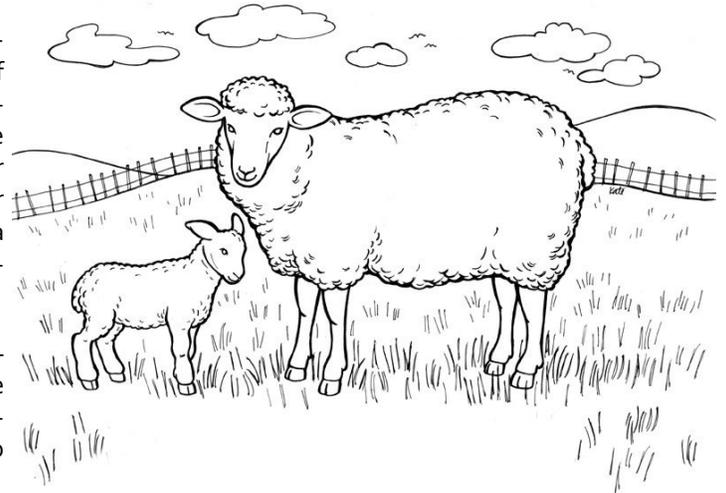
One of the environmental justice projects First Parish committed to in our *Green Sanctuary Action Plan* is to help send children from low-income families to nature camp. As we approach our seventh "Kids to Camp" year to sponsor children's attendance to Sheep Pasture Nature Camp in Easton, we are grateful and excited to have experienced this project growing each year. You, our members have donated so generously we have been able to send increasingly more children each year.

Because of your generosity, these children were able to attend Sheep Pasture Nature Camp for a week of exploration, songs, games and crafts with other kids ages 6 to 12. Sheep Pasture Nature Camp, which is operated by the Natural Resources Trust of Easton, has 154 acres of farm, forest, meadows and streams that provide a perfect outdoor lab for children to learn about their environment and the important role that they can play in protecting it.

When the Green Sanctuary Committee began this project six years ago, our goal was to sponsor one child, but because of your overwhelming support we have been able to sponsor 24 children over the past six summers! We hope to continue this trend and sponsor as many children as possible!

Environmental Justice is the place where concerns for the environment and social justice intersect. It recognizes that the impacts of environmental damage often fall first, and most severely, on disadvantaged individuals and communities. Children from low income communities often bear the brunt of environmental pollution. Their homes and neighborhoods may be in areas that lack green space for them to play. They may never take a family vacation at a lake or at a cabin in the forest. "Kids to Camp" can change this for a small number of children for one week each summer.

As in previous years, camp staff will identify children from low-income families whom First Parish can sponsor. The cost for one week of day camp is \$210 per child. On Sunday, April 10, our collection proceeds will fund this project. Thank you for contributing to this worthwhile program.



You are invited to join the Spring Gathering of Womensphere, a Sacred Circle Gathering for Women through the New England region of The Unitarian Universalist Association. This year's event is

NURTURING THE CREATIVITY IN YOU

In this workshop we will explore writing as a practice towards self-knowing, compassion and love.

We will experiment with physical movement as writing's sister, engaging with our bodies to understand, document and translate our external and internal worlds.

Saturday May 7, 2016

9:30am – 3:30pm

The First Universalist Society of Franklin (FUSF)

262 Chestnut Street, Franklin Ma 02038

For details and registration go to www.uuwomensphere.com

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.*



Off the Common Coffeehouse

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



April 2, 2016 at 8pm

Potluck dinner at 6:30pm

featuring

Anni Clark

and Curt Bessette & Jenn Kurtz duo (Split bill)

Coming Attractions

May 7 — Susie Burke & David Surette
with Andy & Judy

Admission: \$13

*Enjoy our homemade
Refreshments*

Sign up for open mike!

Working for Social Justice - by the Rev. Rachel Tedesco, Community Minister

Mass Bail Fund: We sent a generous \$300 check from our February Share the Plate collection to the Mass Bail Fund. Thanks to all for your generosity! I heard that the bail fund began its work in Plymouth County with two men being released from jail in March. We're making a real and immediate difference.

In the last newsletter, I reported on some of what the Brockton Interfaith Community (BIC) was doing, covering two issues: the Jobs Not Jails Campaign and immigration reform. UU Mass Action is working on these same issues, so we have updates from its March 21st weekly newsletter.

Jobs Not Jails: "Success! Collateral Sanctions RMV bill (S.2021): The House and Senate conferees agreed to a bill that will repeal the \$500 fine and up to 5 year waiting period to regain licenses for 90% of the estimated 7000 returning citizens (*a.k.a. ex-prisoners*) who have been hurt by these punitive restrictions. We are disappointed that restrictions were added to this bill to exclude those convicted of trafficking heroin, cocaine or fentanyl, which goes against the intention of this bill. We recognize that trafficking these substances is a serious crime but the point of this bill is to remove the barriers faced by those who are charged with these crimes when they return to their communities.

"Other positive aspects of the RMV bill include: 1) Any license suspension should run from the date of conviction. 2) The CORI loophole will be closed. This bill requires the registry to shield driving records [from inquiries about] license suspensions for drug violation and several other kinds of suspensions that are not driving related. 3) This bill provides that licenses suspended under the old rules should be reinstated without fees."

Immigration Reform: Executive Director Laura Wagner reported huge setbacks in UU Mass Action's immigration rights work. "The current environment of fear and hatred appears to have influenced our legislators who have opted for inaction rather than being leaders and a voice for compassion and justice.

"Our coalition has labored for immigrant rights for 10 years. Many promises of support were made during this legislative session and yet two critical bills have been 'sent to study.' This means that they are no longer active bills for this session."

On the other hand, here is the **good news**:

The Trust Act (H.1228) – "The House version of this bill is in the Joint Committee on Judiciary. The deadline for a committee decision has been extended until May 2. Our advocacy on April 12 [UU Mass Advocacy Day] will be critical! We need this bill to move out of committee!"

Safe Driving Bill (H.2985) – "This bill is in the Joint Committee on Transportation. The deadline for a committee decision has been extended until May 2... All drivers on MA roads should be licensed, trained and insured."

For more information and updates on immigration rights, go to: <http://www.uumassaction.org/campaigns/immigration/>

At the local level, BIC is supporting a Trust Act to be introduced into the Brockton City Council through Councilor-At-Large Moises Rodrigues. More news on that later as the campaign unfolds.

GREEN TIPS from EDF (Environmental Defense Fund) & GSC

“Pre-cycling” Tips

“Pre-cycle” by making buying choices that support responsible products and packaging. Make recycling easier and reduce the amount of garbage you throw away.

- Shop with reusable bags.
- Take your own containers to restaurant for your leftovers.
- Buy large single containers - the largest you can store - and measure what you need into smaller reusable containers for everyday use.
- Bring clean Styrofoam to church and place it in our Styrofoam recycle bin.
- Choose cardboard egg cartons, which are made from recycled newsprint. For paper boxes the rule of thumb is: if the unprinted side is gray and not white, it's made from recycled materials.
- Compare the size of the package to the size of the product.
- Buy fruit and vegetables loose.



THANK YOU FIRST PARISH

in your show of Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

We are jumping for joy with the passage of the Plastic Bag Reduction Ordinance that was approved by the Bridgewater Town Council 7-1. GSC thanks you for all of your support writing letters, sending e-mails, and attending council meetings. The people of First Parish walk the talk and make us proud!

JOIN THE FIRST PARISH FACEBOOK PRIVATE GROUP - Are you a member or friend of First Parish Bridgewater who is on Facebook? Did you know that there are two First Parish Bridgewater sites on Facebook? Anyone can see the main site. The other site is the First Parish UU Bwater Private Group. There are already 60 members and friends there. You can find it by doing a Facebook search and asking to join. This is a place for our members



A note from the Music Committee:

We are seeking musical contributions for the services for the rest of the church year. Do you have a song in your heart that you'd like to share with your congregation? Please let us know and we'll try to fit you in to a service. Don't be shy! We want to hear you! Email Korin at Mskszigler@aol.com

SAVE THE DATE!!

Seventh Annual **FREE** Metal Recycling Event
Saturday, May 7
9:00 to noon
at First Parish

Spring has sprung and that means it's time to start gathering your metal for First Parish's **Free Metal Recycling Event**, sponsored by the Green Sanctuary Committee. The metal collection will take place on Saturday, May 7, from 9:00 to noon, rain or shine, in the church parking lot. The event is open to both residents and non-residents.

This year we are partnering with Bridgewater Recycling Inc. This is a new venture for Bridgewater Recycling, which has generously agreed to donate a portion of the profits from the metal collection to the Bridgewater food pantry. There will be some changes in the items that can be accepted; those containing Freon (fridges, air conditioners) cannot be accepted unless it is certified that the Freon has been removed. The price of metal is currently low, making it more important than ever that we spread the word and get a large number of friends, family, co-workers, and neighbors involved. Please tell at least three folks about the drive!

Our past recycling drives have netted over \$14,000 in food donations to the Bridgewater Food Pantry. Volunteers are needed to make this year's event a huge success! Please contact Debbie Baumgarten (catsmeowgo8@verizon.net or 774-240-1307) to volunteer to help move the metal during the drive (strong bodies and smiling faces especially appreciated) or to distribute flyers around town and at work places before the event. You may also contact Debbie or Frank Yeatman (508-279-3955 or fryleen@verizon.net) to arrange to leave your metal at church before the day of the event or with any questions.

THANKS TO ALAN YABROUDY & DAVID WILSON FOR UPGRADES TO AUDIOVISUALS IN THE SANCTUARY

Alan and David have used their time, talents, and treasure to upgrade the audio and visual systems in the sanctuary: stewardship at its best. The soundboard has been moved from under the pulpit to the back, next to the video recording equipment. The earphones for people with hearing difficulties have been improved. You've probably noticed Rev. Paul wearing his microphone during services; Alan and David are responsible for this. The large screen at the back of the stage has improved visual presentations. Thank them for their efforts the next time you see them.



Wanted: Lemonade Stand Meister for Fourth of July



Debbie and Sam will be travelling over Fourth of July this year, which means that the coveted position of First Parish Lemonade Stand Meister is available. This position is perfect for one or more people, or even a family, and involves organizing volunteers to "person" the stand throughout the day, as well as purchasing a few supplies ahead of time and keeping the lemonade flowing on the Fourth. Debbie has detailed notes (and the secret recipe!) to share, and can assist in some of the ahead of time responsibilities.

Let's keep our fantastic Lemonade Stand alive!! Please contact Debbie or Sam for more information or to "squeeze into" this important Fourth of July job!

MEMBERSHIP AT FIRST PARISH

If you have been thinking about becoming a member of First Parish but were unable to attend the "New UU" classes in February & March, we would like to accommodate you and get you the information you need in order to join the church as an "Active Member". "Active Members" are those with voting rights who may vote at the Annual Business meeting of First Parish and at other meetings in which decisions regarding First Parish are made.

If you would like to become a member, please contact

Jan Thompson JaniceThompson22@comcast.net (508) 697-2492

or Rev. Paul minister@firstparishbridgewater.org (781) 210-2016.

CIRCLE DINNERS APRIL 8 & 9 and 22 & 23

Our traditional First Parish Circle Dinners will be held Fridays & Saturdays April 8 & 9 and 22 & 23. Circle Dinners are small gatherings held at the homes of First Parish Friends and Members and are a great way for us to get to know each other outside of the Sunday service church setting. We are looking for warm hearted hosts to open their homes to guests for a fun evening of food and conversation. Some of the gatherings will be for adults and others will be open to children as well as parents. Hosts will provide appetizers and beverages and guests will bring the rest of the food including entrees, side dishes, salads, breads and desserts. If you would like to host or attend a Circle Dinner, please sign up on the sheets in the Upper Parish Hall, or contact Jan Thompson JaniceThompson22@comcast.net (508) 697-2492 or any member of the Membership Committee: Mary Hatfield, Karen Messing, Bob Messing, Susan Irish, Susan Holton, or Louella Mann

T"UU"RNING LEAVES BOOK CLUB

Friday, April 1 the Book Club will meet at 7:00 pm at the church to discuss the March selection (not an April Fool's joke). "Life, Animated" by Ron Suskind is the true story of one family's unusual and amazing struggle with autism.

The April selection is "Confederacy of Dunces", an American comic masterpiece. John Kennedy Toole's hero, one Ignatius J. Reilly, is "huge, obese, fractious, fastidious, a latter-day Gargantua, a Don Quixote of the French Quarter. His story bursts with wholly original characters, denizens of New Orleans' lower depths, incredibly true-to-life dialogue, and the zaniest series of high and low comic adventures".

The meeting to discuss this book will be on Friday, May 6 at 7pm location TBD.

MAINSRING HOUSE LUNCHES

Monday, April 4 at 8:30 am MainSpring House lunches will be prepared in the LPH. Volunteers and donations appreciated.

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, April 14 at 7pm the Social Justice Committee will meet at the church to discuss current issues for BIC, UU Mass Action and Bridgewater.

(This meeting was originally scheduled for April 7, but members are invited to attend the "Just Mercy" program on that date at Messiah Baptist in Brockton: pot luck at 6:30, discussion at 7:00 pm.)

THANK YOU

Many thanks to all the folks who sent cards and kind wishes on the death of my brother Frank E. Perkins. It is a blessing to be a member of a beloved community.

Betty Gilson

APRIL 2016 CALENDAR

Friday, April 1

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

Saturday, April 2

8pm Off the Common Coffeehouse

Sunday, April 3

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Worship with Rev. Eliza Blanchard, "Blessing of the Animals"

RE visit to the Lucy Stone House

6pm Adult Game Night

Monday, April 4

8:30am MainSpring House lunches prep at FP

7:30pm Facilities Committee meeting

Thursday, April 7

7pm "Just Mercy" at Messiah Baptist in Brockton, potluck at 6:30pm

Friday, April 8

Circle Dinner

Saturday, April 9

8am NE Regional Workshop hosted by First Parish Bridgewater

Circle Dinner

5pm Family Game Night

Sunday, April 10

9am Choir Practice

10:30am "Kids to Camp" service with the Green Sanctuary Committee

12noon RE Committee Meeting at First Parish

Monday, April 11

7:30pm Green Sanctuary Committee Meeting

Thursday, April 14

7pm Growth Team

7pm Social Justice Committee

Sunday, April 17

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher, Earth Day & New Member Sunday

Friday, April 23

Circle Dinner

Saturday, April 24

Circle Dinner

Sunday, April 25

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Worship with Rev. Rachel Tedesco, "Passover"

5pm Family Game Night at First Parish

Monday, April 26

7:30pm Worship Committee Meeting

Thursday, April 28

7:30pm Parish Committee will meet at First Parish

**First Parish Church
Unitarian Universalist**

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