

# BRIDGING



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

December 2014

## From the Minister...

As Christmas approaches, we can be sure that we will hear yet again about the "War on Christmas." Stores that have signs saying "Happy Holidays" rather than "Merry Christmas" will be excoriated, challenges to manger scenes on town property will be indignantly denounced, and objections to Christmas Carols in our schools will be treated with scorn. This outrage is, of course, excellent fodder for talk shows and cable television, but it also illuminates some of the broader conflicts we have in our society over public expressions of religious belief.

When our Unitarian and Universalist traditions came into being some two hundred years ago, the United States was predominantly Protestant. There were, however, a variety of different denominations at the time the Constitution was written, each jealous of its own prerogatives, so guarantees of religious liberty and the idea "wall of separation between church and state" were embodied in our bill of rights. Ironically, it was Baptists ministers who most insisted on the separation of church and state because they objected to paying taxes to support the Standing Order First and Second and Third Parishes founded by the Puritans. Our parishes – many of which declared themselves "Unitarian" starting in the 1820's – were still supported by town taxes until 1833. In some towns (Hingham, for example), it wasn't until after 1800 that any other denominations were even allowed to start churches (there were occasional riots to ensure no interlopers); the town fathers didn't want to give up the tax dollars that would have been lost if people had gone to other churches.

Down until the 1830's, Congregational and Unitarian churches did not celebrate Christmas at all, regarding it as a near-pagan festival marked by revelry and drunkenness rather than celebration of the birth of Jesus. Charles Dickens, an English Unitarian, helped to create what we now consider our modern Christmas celebration with his immortal Christmas Carol, and one Unitarian minister contributed by introducing the Christmas tree; another wrote "Jingle Bells" and a third wrote "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear."

Irish Roman Catholic immigrants arrived in force in Boston in the early 1800's, and old time residents were aghast at the introduction of Catholic patterns of worship. As Jews became more integrated into American society, new issues of religious tolerance in relation to Christmas arose; the celebration of Hanukkah became more prominent in Judaism in part out of a desire to provide Jewish kids with an alternative to Christmas. With the arrival of increasing numbers of Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and adherents of many other religious groups, it has become increasingly awkward to refer to the December holidays as though they were exclusively Christian. We at First Parish try to attend to at least three of these "festivals of lights" that fall in the darkest time of the year – Christmas, of course, but also Hanukkah and Solstice.

But our roots are Christian, so to all a hearty "Merry Christmas!"

In Faith,  
Paul

## Minister

Rev. Paul Sprecher  
PSprecher@uuma.org

## Directory of Religious Ed

TBD  
dre.bridgewater@gmail.com

## Parish Committee

**President:** Bob Messing  
rmessing@massbankers.org  
508-378-3340

**Vice President:** Sam Baumgarten  
sbaumgarten@verizon.net  
508-697-6848

**Clerk:** Stefan Michaud  
spmicha@verizon.net  
(508) 946-5684

**Treasurer:** Susan Irish  
eirish2@aol.com  
508-378-2906

**Members at Large:** Pat Hart  
Kat Gillespie  
Jan Thompson

## Church Sexton / Building Rental

Tom St.Thomas: 508-697-8637

## Choir Director/Pianist

Denise Haskins  
denisehaskins@comcast.net

## Tone Chimes Choir Director

Lisa Rue  
508-378-8359,  
lisa\_rue80@yahoo.com

## Religious Education Committee

**Chair:** Laurie Lessner  
Peter Jacobson  
Karen Messing  
Sonia D'Alarcao

## Community Minister

Rev. Rachel Tedesco  
revrayted@comcast.com  
508-378-3904

## Social Justice Committee

**Convener:** Betty Gilson  
gillyflower@verizon.net  
774-226-0942

## Membership Committee

**Chair:** Jan Thompson  
redrubberball@verizon.net  
508-697-2492

## Green Sanctuary Committee

**Chair:** Janet Dye  
dyedyeo7@gmail.com  
508-697-9663

## First Principle Project

**Convener:** Betty Gilson  
gillyflower@verizon.net  
774-226-0942

## Facilities Committee

**Chair:** Frank Yeatman  
Fryleen@verizon.net  
508-279-3955

## Office Administrator

Jamie Doulette  
firstparishbridgewater@hotmail.com  
508-697-8229

# Worship Services in December

(10:30am—unless otherwise noted)

The Theme of the Month: December's theme is Anticipation.

## Upcoming Services

December 7– with Rev. Paul Sprecher; Lay Worship Leader Louella Mann; Ushers Korin Zigler & Mark Young

December 14–with Rev. Paul Sprecher; Lay Worship Leader Jenny Donahue; Ushers Kathy Keenan & Alan Yabroudy

December 21 – Coordinated by the Religious Education Committee; Lay Worship Leader Eileen Hiney; Ushers Lisa Rue & Rob Waterman

December 23–7:30pm—Annual “Christmas Eve Eve” Service with Rev. Paul Sprecher; Lay Worship Leader Bob Messing; Ushers Rev. Rachel & David Tedesco

December 28 – with Bobbe Anderson; assisted by Rev. Rachel Tedesco; Ushers Michelle Turner & Ann Thomas

Mary Hatfield is calling lay worship leaders and ushers each week to remind them of their assigned dates. But if you cannot usher on your date, please let Mary know as soon as possible and try to find a substitute. Call her at 508-378-3474.

**This month's Worship Committee meeting** is Thursday, December 11 at 7:30 p.m. in the church office. Members and friends are cordially invited to attend.

If you have any concerns or questions about worship or fresh ideas about “doing” worship, please talk to a member of the committee.

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

## MINISTER'S OFFICE HOURS

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

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

Your help in protecting his time is appreciated.



## Religious Education for Children and Youth

UUnited Youth Ministry:  
Stronger Together



The UUnited youth group meetings in Taunton are now held **twice a month** on the **1st & 3rd Friday from 7- 9 pm**. One adult chaperone is required from each congregation at every meeting. **Volunteer chaperones from FP Bridgewater are needed**. Please contact Pete Jacobson at [ejake4@aol.com](mailto:ejake4@aol.com) or a member of the RE Committee if you are willing to chaperone.

UUnited provides our youth the opportunity to learn the essential steps to becoming an informed and engaged citizen of the world. Discussion, activities, and time to play are all part of the vision of UUnited. [Click for Details](#)

### **Winter Solstice Celebration Service- December 21, 2014**

The service on December 21 will not only celebrate the winter solstice and Christmas, but will also celebrate the many talents of our congregation! You are invited to lend your talents to the celebration. This invitation is especially for children and youth, but we welcome adult talent as well!

Always wanted to sing a solo? Have a few friends that you want to cook up a skit with? Love reading poetry? Play an instrument? Want to show us your dance moves? Is your artistic side itching to design a visual focus?

Participation is voluntary. Whether you are shining on stage or sitting in the pews, a good time will be had by all. Please join us for this joyous, stress-free celebration.

Remember, your "performance" doesn't have to be perfect. This is an opportunity for anyone who wants to get up and strut their stuff without pressure.

Children and youth will have the opportunity to receive guidance, support, and assistance (if they want) during One Room Schoolhouses in December.

So that we can schedule the line-up, please contact Laurie Lessner at [laurie@yabroudy.com](mailto:laurie@yabroudy.com) or speak to your RE teacher **by November 30<sup>th</sup>** if you are interested in participating.

~This celebration is brought to you by the RE Committee...and YOU!!



## HOLLY DAY ARTISAN FAIRE

Friday, December 5, 6pm – 9pm

**Ice Cream & Dessert with Santa Claus**



Saturday, December 6 9am – 3pm

**Famous Soup Lunch Buffet**

**\*\*Cookie Walk\*\*Local Artisans\*\*Books\*\***

**\*\*Antique Treasures\*\*Greens\*\***

**\*\*Visit from Spirit of Mrs. Santa-Saturday\*\***

**First Parish UU Church**

**50 School St, Bridgewater**



## First Parish Church Joining the Brockton Interfaith Committee

The Parish Committee of First Parish voted on Thursday, November 20 to become a member congregation of the Brockton Interfaith Committee (BIC), which is dedicated to faith-based community organizing.

The mission statement of BIC as stated on its website is to organize “people at the grassroots level to achieve power for positive change. Reaching across ethnic, racial, and religious lines, BIC trains its diverse members to improve their community by building relationships, identifying common concerns, finding solutions and taking action for social justice.”

The “community” the mission statement refers to is not just the City of Brockton, but the Greater Brockton Community. This includes the Town of Bridgewater and other adjacent suburbs. BIC is striving to expand its membership to more suburban churches.

BIC is part of a statewide affiliation, the Massachusetts Community Action Network (MCAN). This, in turn, is part of the PICO National Network. PICO stands for People Improving Communities through Organizing. See <http://www.piconetwork.org>.

The Social Justice Committee plans to hold an all-church conversation in the near future to further explain our affiliation. More information about BIC can be found at <http://www.brocktoninterfaithcommunity.org/about>.

~ Rev. Rachel Tedesco



## Off the Common Coffeehouse

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



### December 6, 2014 at 8pm

Potluck dinner at 6:30pm

*featuring*

### The Boxcar Lilies with Davey O

#### Coming Attractions

January 3 — David Roth with Rick Gottlieb

February 7 — Greg Greenway

March 7 — Les Sampou (tickets \$15.00) with Annalise Emerick

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

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

*Admission: \$13*

*Enjoy our homemade  
Refreshments*

*Sign up for open mike!*

## Let It Snow, Let It Snow...

It's clearly not too early to be thinking about snow—and the possibility of cancelling a Sunday service in the event of having too much of it. First Parish policy for closings in the event of snow or other weather-related emergencies calls for notices to be posted on:

Television: WBZ (Boston CBS network)

Telephone: First Parish answering machine message (508) 697-2525

Internet: [www.firstparishbridgewater.com](http://www.firstparishbridgewater.com), Facebook, or [www.cbsboston.com](http://www.cbsboston.com)

A decision to cancel a Sunday service, which would be made jointly by the minister, sexton, and Parish Committee president, would be posted no later than 7am on the day of the service.

Cancelling a Sunday service is not something any of us would want to do, but the safety of the congregation, volunteers, and church staff will always come first.

Thanks,

Bob Messing  
Parish Committee President



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## MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE INVITATION

The First Parish Membership Committee is seeking smart (that's you!), friendly (you, too!) and dedicated (once again, you!) people to join us in our efforts to help First Parish grow, not just in numbers, but in community spirit. We are looking for new ideas for outreach as well as ideas to keep First Parish an active and vibrant spiritual community. If you are interested in joining the Membership Committee, or would like more information about what work the committee does, please contact Jan Thompson [JaniceThompson22@comcast.net](mailto:JaniceThompson22@comcast.net) (508) 697-2492.



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## G....R....O....W....T....H!!!

In addition to Jan Thompson's call for new members for the Membership Committee, the Parish Committee is looking for a few individuals who may be especially interested in helping First Parish grow. How can we get our message out to the community? How can we best attract new members? If you have some "marketing" ideas or any suggestions in this area, we need you. Please reply to Sam Baumgarten, VP of the Parish Committee if you would like to brainstorm ideas for growth.

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## From the Green Sanctuary Committee "Gently used" cloth napkins and dish towels needed

You may have noticed the cloth napkins at recent church dinners. The Green Sanctuary Committee hopes to expand their use to coffee hour, too, and is asking for your help. Please consider donating "gently used" cloth napkins. As we do with the cloth towels in the Ladies Room, committee members will launder the napkins and have a supply available each week. The committee is also looking for additional dish towels to restock the kitchen. A basket will be available in the Upper Parish Hall for your donations. New napkins or dish towels will also be gratefully accepted. Please contact Debbie Baumgarten at [catsmeowgo8@verizon.net](mailto:catsmeowgo8@verizon.net) or 508-697-6848 with any questions. The Green Sanctuary Committee (and Mother Earth!) thanks you in advance.

## GREEN SANCTUARY COMMITTEE'S Green Tip of the Month

The mantra *Reduce! Reuse! Recycle!* is quite apt for Christmas. In this time when we are pushed as consumers to spend more, give yourself permission to keep it simple. Give fewer gifts. Make some of them if you have time. Spend time with friends and family. Come to the Christmas Eve service instead of driving to the mall. Donate a Carol-o-gram instead of buying a material gift. It's OK to re-gift! Do you have old Christmas cards kicking around? You can use them for to/from tags. Breathe deeply and enjoy the season.



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### T"UU"RING LEAVES BOOK CLUB

There will be no meeting of the Book Club in December. Stay tuned for information on the selections for 2015. Maybe you will receive something as a holiday present that you would like to suggest to Frank Baxter as a selection.

### MAINSRING HOUSE LUNCHESES

Monday, December 1 at 9am MainSpring house lunches will be made in the LPH. Donations and volunteers are welcome.

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### CIRCLE DINNER "THANK YOU"S

This round of Circle Dinners was a great success, filled with fine food and wonderful company. It was a pleasure to gather in small groups outside of church to get to know each other. A million thanks to our hosts:

LAURIE LESSNER & ALAN YABROUDY

DIANE & TONY ROZA

REV. RACHEL & DAVID TEDESCO

LISA RUE & ROB WATERMAN

BETH & KEIR MANCHESTER-HOWELL

Your warm and gracious hospitality made us all feel welcome!

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### HEALING WISHES...

... to Susan Irish who is recovering from hip replacement surgery.

... to Gordon Hatfield, who suffered a small stroke early in November.

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### PIANO MOVE HELPERS NEEDED

I'm looking for able bodied men or women to help move my large upright piano out to the end of the driveway. I've tried to donate it - and no takers. This is how it worked last time I had to move the piano (for the floors to be taken out). Have been enjoying the piano since it was moved by able bodied men from First Parish years back. But have had a smaller piano offered to me by family and need to pick it up/make room for it. Please contact [lisa\\_rue80@yahoo.com](mailto:lisa_rue80@yahoo.com) or at 508/378-8359.



## COOKIE WALK

A highlight of the Holly Day Faire is the Annual Cookie Walk. Bakers of all ages are invited to contribute your tastiest cookies and bars to this event. And everyone is encouraged to buy plenty of the delicious goodies to take home or to a party.

We're going to need lots of cookies for our popular Cookie Walk (Friday evening, December 5 & Saturday, December 6). If you'd like to bake a batch or two or three of cookies, let Betty Gilson (gillyflower@verizon.net) or Laurie Lessner (laurie@yabroudy.com) know the following:



The Type of Cookie you'll be making  
How Many Cookies you'll be making  
What Day you will drop them off; Friday (12/5) or Saturday (12/6).

- Drop-off your cookies in the kitchen. We will clearly mark the area
- Cookies should be in closed containers, labeled with your name and the name of the cookie

To make pricing easy, cookies should be fairly large - 3" (about 1.5 tablespoons dough) or a 2" square bar.

Price is \$.50 per cookie or a Baker's Dozen (13 cookies) for \$6.00.

If you need inspiration, Pinterest is a wonderful place to find it. I have some categorized here: <http://www.pinterest.com/laurcl/>, but there are plenty more out there.

Thank you for all your effort! It is greatly appreciated.

Laurie & Betty

### DO YOUR HOLIDAY SHOPPING AT AMAZON.COM

For those of you who shop with Amazon.com, please remember...

First Parish gets a donation for purchases at amazon.com if you go to their site through the First Parish website.



Just visit [www.firstparishbridgewater.org](http://www.firstparishbridgewater.org) and at the very bottom of the front page is a link "buy from Amazon". Just click it and shop as you normally would. A few weeks later, First Parish receives a check that is a percentage of every sale made this way.

**Next Adult RE Class:** We will continue our Adult Religious Education program on Tuesday, Dec. 9, at 7:30. We will be reading and discussing *The First Christmas: What the Gospels Really Teach about Jesus's Birth* by the authors of *The Last Week*, on which Rev. Anita led a class last spring. The authors discuss the differences between the two stories about the birth of Jesus in the Bible, provide context for the stories, and help us understand what meaning they had for their first readers and for us. We will be meeting on Dec. 9, Dec. 16, and Jan. 13. Rev. Paul is happy to get copies of the book for anyone who wants to participate for \$11, and it's also available for download electronically. Please fill out the signup sheet in the Parish Hall or send an email to [minister@firstparishbridgewater.org](mailto:minister@firstparishbridgewater.org) if you wish to join the class AND indicate whether you want to order a book.

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## ***HOLIDAY CAROL-O-GRAMS***

*Spread holiday cheer through the gift of music!*



**Door Carols: Sunday, December 14th 4–7 PM~ \$25**

**Phone Carols: Friday, December 19th 6:30–9 PM ~\$10**

**Sign up at church starting 11/30,  
or email Korin Zigler at [mzkzigler@aol.com](mailto:mzkzigler@aol.com)**

**Make sure to remember your lucky recipient's  
address or phone number!**

***Thank you for your support  
of the music program  
at First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church!***



## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Sage Michaud
- 2 Olive James
- 8 Louella Mann
- 9 Ken Crompton
- 11 Jim Moore
- 12 Sonia D'Alarcao
- 17 Abby Foster
- 20 Chloe St.Thomas
- 21 Lauren Foster
- 25 Patrick Donahue
- 27 Lily Jacobson, Adrienne McDougall,
- 30 Gordon Hatfield

## DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 4 Mary & Gordon Hatfield
- 26 Lori Tunewicz-Gavin & Paul Gavin



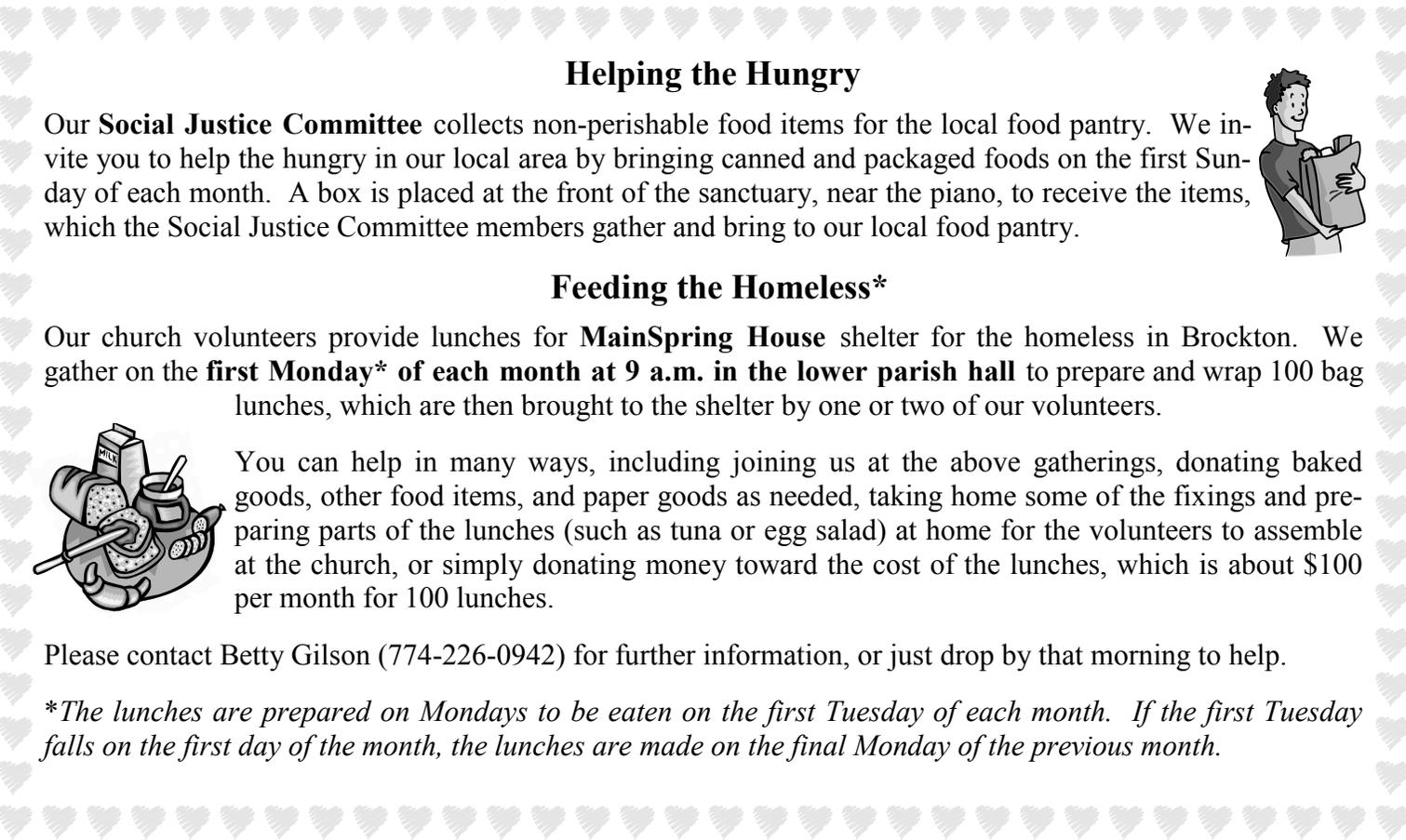
**DECEMBER 7  
TBD**

**DECEMBER 14  
ANGELA SHEBLE**

**DECEMBER 21  
TBD**

**DECEMBER 23  
MANY HANDS**

**DECEMBER 28  
BRING YOUR GOODIES TO SHARE**



## 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.*

# DECEMBER 2014 CALENDAR

Monday, December 1

9am MainSpring House lunch prep at FP

7:30pm Facilities Committee meeting

Tuesday, December 2

6:30pm Tone Chimes rehearsal at Lisa Rue's

Friday, December 5

6-9pm Holly Day Artisan Faire at First Parish

Saturday, December 6

9am-3pm Holly Day Artisan Faire at First Parish

**Sunday, December 7**

9am Choir rehearsal

9:30am Tone Chimes rehearsal

10:30am Worship Service with Rev. Paul Sprecher

6pm Game Night at First Parish

Monday, December 8

7:30pm Green Sanctuary Committee Meeting

Tuesday, December 9

5pm RE Committee Meeting

7:30pm Adult RE Class at FP

Thursday, December 11

7pm Worship Committee meeting at First Parish

**Sunday, December 14**

9am Choir Practice

10:30am Worship Service with Rev. Paul Sprecher

4pm Door Carol-o-Grams

Monday, December 15

6:30pm Tone Chimes rehearsal at Lisa Rue's

Tuesday, December 16

Happy Hanukkah!

7:30pm Adult RE Class at FP

Wednesday, December 17

7pm Science and Religion Discussion Group at FP

Thursday, December 18

7:30pm Parish Committee Meeting at First Parish

Friday, December 19

6:30pm Phone Carol-o-Grams

**Sunday, December 21**

9am Choir rehearsal

9:30am Tone Chimes rehearsal at Lisa Rue's

10:30am RE Program Winter Solstice Celebration Service

Tuesday, December 23

6:30pm Tone Chimes rehearsal at Lisa Rue's

7:30pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with Rev. Paul Sprecher

Thursday, December 25

Merry Christmas!!

**Sunday, December 28**

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Worship Service

Wednesday, December 31

Have a Safe and Happy New Year's Eve!

**First Parish Church  
Unitarian Universalist**  
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