

BRIDGING



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

February 2015

From the Minister...

"Always More to Learn"

Last month I wrote about things I've been learning in my personal life; this month I want to focus on how and what all of us need to learn. Over the next few months, I'm going to continue leading classes on Tuesday nights at 7:30, but we're going to be doing a total of three classes by changing up our schedule. We'll do a Reading/Discussion group on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays (and maybe the 5th), a "New/Renew UU" class on the 3rd Tuesdays in February and March, and "Five Wishes Before I Die" on the 3rd Tuesdays in April and May. (Details on dates, etc., inside under "Adult Religious Education" and on our web site under "Religious Education"). Let me explain:

Our next Reading/Discussion will follow a style similar to the way we've worked our way through *Love and Death* and *The First Christmas* over the past few months. This time we'll take up *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion*, by Jonathan Haidt. Haidt takes on one of the key issues of the era, namely, the polarization of the nation, politics, religion – everywhere – between left and right, liberal and conservative, reactionary and progressive. We experience this in many realms – where we get our news, how different parts of our country vote, and what happens when far-flung families gather around the Thanksgiving table. Almost any public event – the failure of a grand jury to return an indictment when a policeman kills a civilian, the State of the Union address, or a terrorist attack on a French satirical journal – will result in a fairly predictable range of responses, largely predictable based on political or religious divisions.

We as religious liberals need to learn better how to understand those we disagree with; and we need to learn how to talk to others across the chasms of ideology and belief that separate us. I have found that Haidt's book is an eye-opener to many religious liberals and that it helps to improve comprehension across some of these chasms. We'll start talking about this process on Tuesday, Feb. 10th at 7:30 in a class we'll call "**Beyond Polarization.**"

Those of you who have recently started coming to First Parish need to know more about the history and practice of our Unitarian Universalist faith tradition and our congregation as you consider whether to become a member of our congregation. Many of our members and long-time friends might also want to learn more or refresh their understanding of our Living Tradition as well. So we'll be offering a two-session class we'll call "**New/Renew UU**" on Tuesday, Feb. 17 & Tues, Mar. 17, also at 7:30. We'll have a (small) reading assignment for each class from *The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide*. See me or Jan Thomson to arrange to get a copy. *If you are considering becoming a member of First Parish but can't meet at these times, please contact me and we'll work out an alternative.*

Finally, we undertake in this congregation "to help one another" as we journey through all of the stages of our lives together. One part of our task in living is to consider how to approach our own death and what comes after. As Forrest Church puts it in *Love and Death*, "Religion is our human response to the dual reality of being alive and having to die." Some of us worked through a program called "**Five Wishes Before I Die**" – wishes about who will make health care decisions when you can't, what kind of medical treatment you want or don't want, how comfortable you want to be, how you want people to treat you, and what you want your loved ones to know. Unfortunately, many of you took the course but didn't fill out the paperwork necessary to carry out your wishes. So we'll have two sessions on "Five Wishes" – one on Tuesday, April 21 to introduce and discuss the material (whether you've done it before or not), the second on May 19 to share our documents and talk about what we discovered in working through the process. Accountability is a wonderful thing!

I hope many of you can join me for one or several of these learning opportunities. I love to teach and learn from all of you!

In Faith for the Journey,

Rev. Paul

Minister

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PSprecher@uuma.org

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Parish Committee

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sbaumgarten@verizon.net
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Members at Large: Pat Hart
Kat Gillespie
Jan Thompson

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Tom St. Thomas: 508-697-8637

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Peter Jacobson
Sonia D'Alarcao

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Membership Committee
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Green Sanctuary Committee
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Worship Services in February

The Theme of the Month: Evolution and Truth

Upcoming Services

February 1— with Rev. Paul Sprecher; Lay Worship Leader Jeff Roop; Ushers Michele & Warren Dahlin

February 8 – Evolution with the Science & Religion discussion group; Worship Leader Rev. Rachel Tedesco; Ushers Janice Faith & Stan Stinson

February 15—with Rev. Paul Sprecher; Lay Worship Leader Karen Messing; Ushers Eileen Hiney & Frank Yeatman

February 22 – with Rev. Paul Sprecher; Lay Worship Leader Jenny Donahue; Ushers Hope Valerelli & David Hirschy

If you cannot usher on your date, please try to find a substitute and let Mary Hatfield know as soon as possible. Call her at 508-378-3474.

Returning borrowed hymnals: If you've taken a hymnal home to prepare for a service... or for any reason at all... please return these to the Sanctuary on Sunday. Thank you!

Reminder: When the children and youth are in their RE programs, we plan to stay in the Sanctuary until 11:30 a.m. even if the service ends earlier to give RE enough time to finish. If the service ends well before 11:30, we may sing another hymn or have a brief discussion around an interesting question raised during the service.

The next Worship Committee meeting is Thursday, February 19 at 7:30 p.m. in the church office. Members and friends are cordially invited to attend.

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

Monthly Hymn: You may have noticed the inclusion of a monthly hymn in our services this year. For instance, we sang Be Ours a Religion for every service in October, All Around the Child for all our December services, etc. There are two reasons for this. Rev. Paul, together with the Worship Committee, instituted a practice of theme based worship this year. Our September theme was Covenant, October was Worship, etc. We have been trying to choose a hymn that is relevant to the monthly theme and include it in our OOS every Sunday that month. The second reason is, we would like to learn some new hymns! You don't learn a new hymn by singing it once! If you sing it every week for 4 weeks, you own it. If we are successful, you will have learned ten new (or almost new) hymns by the end of the church year! The theme for February is Evolution and Truth, and the monthly hymn is A Firemist and a Planet.

Denise

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 (home: 781-210-2016, cell: 781-774-0086).

Your help in protecting his time is appreciated.



Adult Religious Education

(for links to more details, see our web site under "Religious Education")

"Beyond Polarization" Reading/discussion of *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion*, by Jonathan Haidt. Haidt helps us understand why liberals (religious and political) have difficulty understanding their conservative friends, neighbors and relatives.

Schedule: 2nd, 4th & 5th Tuesdays Feb. 10-Apr. 28, 7:30.

Books can be borrowed from the library, downloaded as a Kindle eBook, or purchased new or used. We will be using the paperback edition (pagination differs in the hardcover). I am happy to buy copies for \$10 for anyone who wishes. Let Rev. Paul know that you want a book by email (see below), the signup sheet in the Upper Parish Hall, or via our FaceBook pages.

Assignments: Feb. 10: Introduction, distribute books, introduce moral dilemmas
Feb. 24: Read to page 60 (Intro and chapters 1 & 2)
Mar. 10: Read to p. 108 (Chapters 3 & 4)
Mar. 24: Read to p. 179 (Chapters 5-7)
Mar. 31: Read to p. 255 (Chapters 8-9)
Apr. 14: Read to p. 318 (Chapters 10-11)
Apr. 28: Read to p. 372 (Chapter 12 & Conclusion)

"New/Renew UU" A class for anyone who wants to be a member of First Parish OR to learn more about our Unitarian Universalist faith tradition. **Schedule:** Tuesdays, Feb. 17 and Mar. 17 at 7:30. If you wish to become a member but can't meet at these times, please see Rev. Paul to work out alternative meeting times.

Books will be provided by First Parish. We will be using *The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide*. Contact Jan Thompson or Rev. Paul to get your copy.

"Five Wishes Before I Die" This is a program that asks us to consider our wishes about how we will prepare ourselves and those we love for our own deaths. The wishes are about who will make health care decisions when you can't, what kind of medical treatment you want or don't want, how comfortable you want to be, how you want people to treat you, and what you want your loved ones to know. If you've done this program before, this will be an opportunity to finish writing your wishes down, but if you haven't, it's a good opportunity to think about these issues.

Schedule: Tuesday, April 21, 7:30 – Introduction and discussion of material.

Tuesday, May 19 - share documents and talk about what was discovered in working through the process. Accountability is a wonderful thing!

Questions? Contact Rev. Paul at minister@firstparishbridgewater.org

MUSIC COMMITTEE NEWS

Thank you for your support of the Carol-o-gram program this last Christmas. We spread holiday cheer both door-to-door and over the phone, and raised \$960 for our church! The Music Committee: Denise Haskins, Korin Zigler, Tom St. Thomas, Lisa Rue, and Eileen Hiney.





GREEN SANCTUARY COMMITTEE'S Green Tip of the Month

As we look for small things that we can do at home to conserve water. Grab a wrench and fix that leaky faucet. It's simple, inexpensive, and you can save 140 gallons a week of water from being wasted.

MITTEN TREE COLLECTION- SUCCESS

First Parish collected a total of 55 items (hats, gloves/mittens, scarves & socks) for the children of Head Start in Brockton. The donations were delivered and very gratefully received. The staff person noted that they serve over 400 children at the program, and that they are constantly losing their hats and mittens! They expressed their gratitude to First Parish for the generous donations that will be put to good use.



CLASSES IN UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM FOR NEW MEMBERS (or a Refresher for the Rest of Us)

We will be holding a 2 session class in Unitarian Universalism geared toward those folks who are considering joining First Parish as Active Members. Active Members have full voting rights at all meetings in which decisions regarding the management of the church are made. Information covered in the classes will include the history and principles of Unitarian Universalism as well as information regarding the management of First Parish. A text "The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide" will be used for this class.

The class will be held Tuesday evenings **February 17 and March 17** from 7:30 - 9 pm. All are welcome. Whether you are new to First Parish or a long time member or friend, please contact Jan Thompson of the Membership Committee JaniceThompson22@comcast.net (508) 697-2492 if you are interested in taking the class and would like a copy of the book reserved for you. If you are interested in becoming a member of First Parish but are unable to attend the classes, please talk to Jan Thompson. We would like to find a way to accommodate you.



Off the Common Coffeehouse

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



February 7, 2015 at 8pm

Potluck dinner at 6:30pm

featuring

Greg Greenway

Coming Attractions

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!

FIRST PARISH SUNDAY SERVICE VIEWING

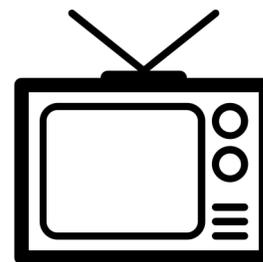
If you missed attending a Sunday service there are several ways you can still see it:

- Rev. Paul's sermons are up on the church website www.firstparishbridgewater.org Just scroll to the bottom of the page and click on "sermons". There is also a link to the BTV-9 cable channel website on the sermon page where you can view the entire service on your computer.

- The services are shown on cable station BTV-9 (available in Bridgewater only) several times during the week. You can go to their website www.btvaccess.com and go to the scheduling section to find the times our services are shown.

- The services are recorded every week on DVD. You can borrow a DVD of a specific service for viewing at your convenience from the church office.

Now you never have to miss a First Parish service! Life is good!



FROM THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

The stewardship committee has been busy planning this year's pledge drive and we want to share our progress with the congregation. It's often difficult discussing money. For the past couple of years, we've brought the top financial donors in the church together for a "Stewardship Gathering", where they are wined and dined and hear a presentation on why they should continue to give to the church and why they should give even more. We would like to give more members the opportunity to come to the gathering.

The people invited in the past were those who gave 25% or more than the average pledge, which was \$1,800. Last year, this accounted for 69%, or \$49,000 of the budget. As you can see, a fairly small number of people give the most in our church.

If we're not going to make the invitation based solely on a dollar amount, to try and make it fair to those who don't have the same means as others, do we base it on a percentage increase over last year? What is a reasonable increase? If you were only able to give \$100 because of your financial situation and you increase that by 10%, that's a \$10 increase. Is that fair to the people who make greater sacrifices? We know there are people who are at a period in their lives where they aren't able to give more financially than the cost the church incurs to have them as members (about \$80 / year for UUA dues). Most of us have been there and we're happy you're able to lend this support and be a part of the First Parish family.

What if we go back to the [Fair Share Giving Guide](#) and if a person makes a whole percentage increase of their adjusted income, they get invited? The Guide says to ask yourself, is the church a significant part of my life and does it promote my spiritual growth? If you said "yes", increase to 3% of your income. Is the church central to your identity and are you committed to sustaining its programs? If you said "yes", then increase your %age to 4%. Do you see yourself as a visionary, where you're committed to both the present and future growth of this congregation? If you think "yes", increase your pledge to 5%. Would a full percentage of income increase be worthy of getting an invite to the party? That's much more significant, isn't it?

We are asking for those who want to pre-pledge, before the Stewardship Gathering on March 5th, to do so and if you increase your pledge by a percentage of your income, consider yourself invited! To pre-pledge, email your pledge amount to Frank Yeatman (fryleen@verizon.net). We'll also be inviting the top 50% of those who pledged last year, to try and increase the number of people we can give special thanks to. And to honor those who share their time and talent, and maybe not as much treasure, we are having a whole church Stewardship celebration dinner on Saturday, March 21st. Location TBD.

SHARE THE PLATE FOR FEBRUARY

Don't Forget Us...Pet Us is run and funded by two working moms. Don't Forget Us helps animals in need, often being an animal's LAST resource.



Description

Don't Forget Us strives to make our animals second chance at life truly COUNT!!! We find ways to give back to our community and perhaps those places where comfort is needed most. Our animals have travelled to Newtown, CT, Short Term Crisis Shelters, Homeless Shelters, attended Hospice camps, and have reached out to South Coast Neediest Families.....all volunteer of course!!! To help offset the HUGE cost of the animals we provide Pony Rides/Mobile Petting Zoo For Parties and Events. We also have Pet Therapy for Nursing Homes, Hospices and private individuals. In addition, we provide educational programs in preschools and daycares where your students can become a Rescue Ranger! We ARE licensed with the USDA, all our animals are regulated and inspected by them on a regular basis.

Location- Dartmouth, MA

They are truly devoted to rescuing animals. They have animals from horses to goats to hamsters. No animal is too small. Although they are located in Dartmouth they clearly rescue animals from all over. They also provide services all over too...they have brought animals to some of the residential homes for adults with development disabilities operated by BAMSI. I believe their mission clearly aligns with the UU 7th principle and they do the work of "animal ministry."

More information: Their Facebook page is much better than their website. https://www.facebook.com/dontforgetuspetus?fref=pb&hc_location=profile_browser

MAINSRING HOUSE LUNCHESES

Monday, February 2 at 9am in the LPH lunches will be made for MainSpring House homeless Shelter in Brockton. Donations and volunteers are always welcome. Contact Betty Gilson for more info.

T"UU"RNING LEAVES BOOK CLUB

Friday, February 27 at 7pm, location TBD, the T"UU"rning Leaves Book Club will meet to discuss the Feb. selection *The View from Castle Rock* by Alice Munro. In stories that are more personal than any that she has written before, Alice Munro, winner of the Nobel Prize for literature, pieces her family history into gloriously imagined fiction.

PEACE VIGIL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, February 17 at 5pm the Peace Vigil Committee will meet to discuss plans and report on actions taken for the Peace Celebration in September. New members and ideas are welcome. We realize this is school vacation week and some interested people may be away, but send ideas to Betty Gilson if you can't attend.



THANKYOU!

The 'wish-list' items for the APCSM were dropped off by Clara Waterman-Rue last week. Thank you for your support at the Holly Day Faire table - through sales of homemade biscuits, and personally decorated ornaments and note cards... Needy animals are starting 2015 being better cared for in Brockton.

STONE CHIMES

The Ringers will rehearse TWO Monday evenings in February, February 2nd (to play the Prelude Feb. 8th) and February 23rd (to play the Prelude March 1st.) Practice is at the home of Lisa Rue at 6:30. Please contact to confirm if you're coming. 508/378-8359 or lisa_rue80@yahoo.com. Practice still will take place on the morning of each day playing the Prelude, at 9:30 at the church. THANK YOU! :)

MARK YOUNG—ART SHOWING—BRIDGEWATER PUBLIC LIBRARY

Library show; Now through February 29th, 2015.

Works by Mark Young "Past, Present and future". Fifty years in art.

This is the kickoff of the "Studio and Art Center, Inc" . A new non-profit organization to teach art, metal sculpture, painting and the other disciplines in art, Bridgewater Ma.

Library show:

There are 25 paintings and sculptures of several phases of my career, with my all newest works belonging to the The Studio & Art Center, Inc.

This show kicks off an offering of these works for sale to fund the new school. Corporate sponsors as welcome and Interior Designers, ASID and Architects etc. Commercial and residential commissions available for large projects.

Some of these works are from 1963 forward, are from the Collection of Meghan R. Young and Samuel J. Young (In trust). There will be other shows and I will post the dates and locations.

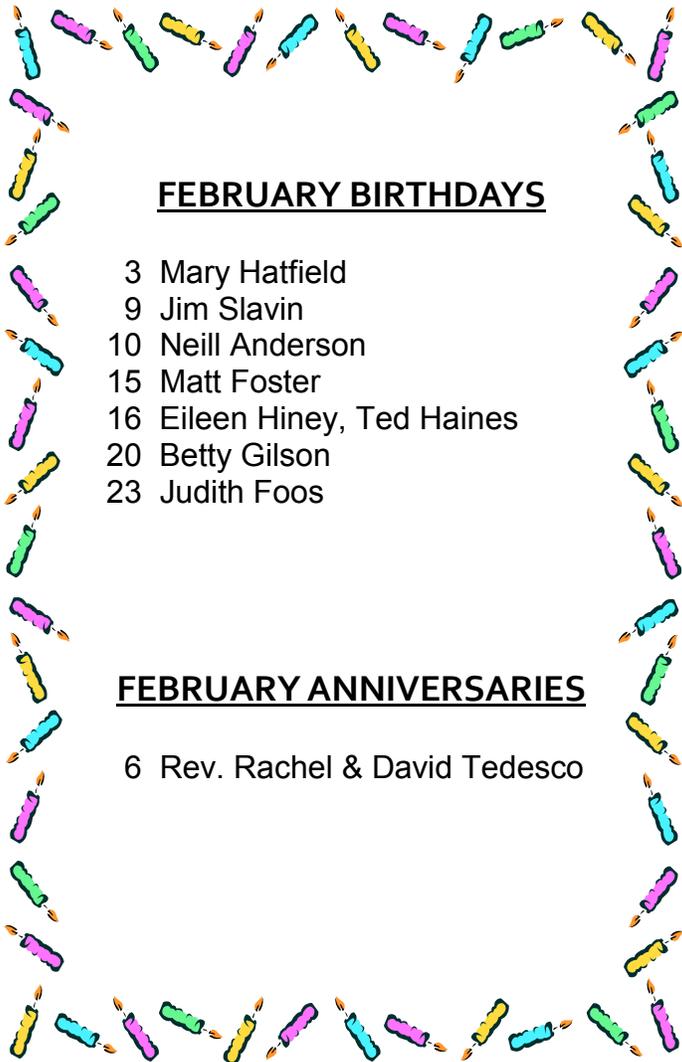
Classes:

Classes: I taught at the Fuller Museum here in Brockton, Ma. when I first came here in 2000. I will be rejoining them and others here, to set up a school to teach art. I will teaching metal sculpture, painting and the School will also feature other Instructors. I am in the process of negotiating on one of two buildings and will have this set up for spring 2015,

Contact through: goodartstuff@aol.com

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Bridgewater-Public-Library/153944794665169> Press Release: Library show; now through February 29th, 2015. Works by Mark Young "Past, Present and future". Fifty years in art. This is the kickoff of the " Studio and Art Center, Inc" . A new non-profit organization to teach art, metal sculpture, painting and the other disciplines in art, Bridgewater Ma. Library show: There are 25 paintings and sculptures of several phases of my career, with my all newest works belonging to the The Studio & Art Center, Inc. This show kicks off an offering of these works for sale to fund the new school. Corporate sponsors as welcome and Interior Designers, ASID and Architects etc. Commercial and residential commissions available for large projects. Some of these works are from 1963 forward , are from the Collection of Meghan R. Young and Samuel J. Young (In trust). There will be other shows and I will post the dates and locations. Classes: Classes: I taught at the Fuller Museum here in Brockton, Ma. when I first came here in 2000. I will be rejoining them and others, to set up a school to teach art. I will be teaching metal sculpture, painting and the School will also feature other Instructors. I am in the process of negotiating one of two buildings and will have this set up for spring 2015, Contact through: goodartstuff@aol.com Please come and visit on February 7, 2015 10am to 1:30pm for the official kick off.





FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Mary Hatfield
- 9 Jim Slavin
- 10 Neill Anderson
- 15 Matt Foster
- 16 Eileen Hiney, Ted Haines
- 20 Betty Gilson
- 23 Judith Foes

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- 6 Rev. Rachel & David Tedesco

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS



FEBRUARY 1

Juanita Brunelle

FEBRUARY 8

the Harding Family

FEBRUARY 15

Karen Messing & Bobbe Anderson

FEBRUARY 22

Eileen Hiney & Frank Yeatman

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.*

FEBRUARY 2015 CALENDAR

Sunday, February 1

10:30am Worship Service with Rev. Paul Sprecher

Monday, February 2

9am MainSpring House lunches prep at FP

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

7:30pm Facilities Committee meeting

Saturday, February 7

7pm Off the Common Coffeehouse featuring Greg Greenway

Sunday, February 8

10:30am Worship Service with Rev. Rachel Tedesco

6pm Game Night at First Parish

Tuesday, February 10

5:30pm RE Committee Meeting

7:30pm Adult RE Classes at First Parish

Monday, February 11

7:30pm Green Sanctuary Committee Meeting at Janet Dye's

Sunday, February 15

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Worship Service with Rev. Paul Sprecher

Tuesday, February 17

5pm Peace Vigil Committee meeting

7:30pm New/Renew UU at First Parish

Wednesday, February 18

7pm Science and Religion Discussion Group at FP

Thursday, February 19

7:30pm Worship Committee meeting in church office

Sunday, February 22

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Worship Service with Rev. Paul Sprecher

Monday, February 23

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

Tuesday, February 24

7:30pm Adult RE Classes at First Parish

Thursday, February 26

7:30pm Parish Committee Meeting in the UPH

Friday, February 27

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

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HEALING WISHES...

... to DeeDee Sprecher, who continues to recover from surgery in December.

... to Ray Mack, who had a fall at home.

CONDOLENCES...

... to Pamela Hayes-Bohanan and family. Pam lost her dad in January.

... to Sue St. Thomas who's brother-in-law passed away.

... to Lauren Foster on the death of her grandmother.