

BRIDGING



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

February 2016

From the Minister...

“Desire”

Love has taken away my practices
And filled me with poetry.

I tried to keep quiet repeating,
No strength but yours,
but I couldn't

I had to clap and sing.
I used to be respectable and chaste and stable,
but who can stand in this strong wind
and remember these things?

“Buoyancy” - Rumi

Desires of many kinds stir in our hearts, growing and changing at every stage of our lives. Remember the overwhelming desire for a cookie or a toy when you were very small? Longing for a loved one, desiring wealth, a beautiful object, loving our children – all of these desires take hold of us and lead us on to achievement, conquest and sometimes satisfaction.

Other desires are more worrisome: Addictions, obsessive pursuits, pipe dreams that lead us on only to break our hearts. What I really want at any moment can fade with the appearance of another possibility. Sometimes we experience ourselves as driven by rather than seeking out our desires.

Rumi, the Persian ecstatic poet of 8 centuries ago, often speaks of his intense love for his Friend – by whom he means variously God or his drinking companion. He speaks of being taken over by this love, which is itself a manifestation of his desire for the infinite, the All.

The Buddha taught that the suffering of human life is caused by desire; or at least the desire to possess things or people. I sometimes think the word “grasping” might be a better way of understanding his meaning, but there is a deep truth in his discovery that it is our wanting – and wanting always more – that is at the root of our unhappiness, because we can't actually possess everything that we desire. Life is always going to be disappointing.

So the question becomes: How do we desire the right things? How do we learn to desire what is possible? How do we motivate ourselves to seek what is real and lasting and satisfying rather than what glitters before us?

Here's Rumi's advice:

Fall in love with
the agony of love
not the ecstasy
then the beloved
will fall in love with you

That will take some unpacking!

Community Vespers for Peace
Monday, February 15, 6:30pm

First Church West Bridgewater, 29 Howard St.

Five of our local congregations (First Parish, United Methodist, and UCC East, West & Central Square) are banding together to hold a regular monthly vespers service to remember the victims of violence and to pray for peace. We first gathered last June at Central Square Congregational right after the massacre of nine innocents at Mother Emmanuel Church in Charleston. We had thought of holding a service every time there was a mass shooting – but there are too many. This is a small way to find peace in our own and one another's hearts. Please join us.

In Faith,
Rev. Paul

Minister

Rev. Paul Sprecher

PSprecher@uuma.org

781-774-0086

Directory of Religious Ed

Sara Williams

dre.bridgewater@gmail.com

978-257-0240

Parish Committee

President: Sam Baumgarten

sbaumgarten@verizon.net

508-697-6848

Vice President: Eileen Hiney

Fryleen@verizon.net

508-279-3955

Clerk: Stefan Michaud

spmicha@verizon.net

(508) 946-5684

Treasurer: Susan Irish

eirish2@aol.com

508-378-2906

Members at Large: Andrew Harding

Kat Gillespie

Jan Thompson

Church Sexton / Building Rental

Tom St. Thomas

street8637@yahoo.com

508-697-8637

Choir Director/Pianist

Denise Haskins

denisehaskins@comcast.net

508-264-7617

Tone Chimes Choir Director

Lisa Rue

lisa_rue80@yahoo.com

508-378-8359

Religious Education Committee

Chair: Laurie Lessner

Peter Jacobson

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

janicethompson22@comcast.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

508-846-7778

Worship Services in February

Worship Committee News

The theme for the month of February is "Desire". The hymn of the month is "May Your Life Be as a Song," #1059 in *Singing the Journey* hymnal.

Worship Services:

February 7 – Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher. "Desire/Grasping" – When we desire something (or someone) we can fall "head over heels," sometimes to the point of obsession. One of the greatest sources of joy (so the Buddha tells us) is also the root of suffering. - Lay Worship Leader: McKayla Hoffman.

Islamic Forum immediately after the service February 7. The Forum originally planned for St. Basil's on Jan. 24 (deferred because of snow) is being hosted by First Parish on February 7th. We'll share our social hour with guests from the community and start the program at 12 noon.

February 14 – Worship with Rev. Rachel Tedesco. Valentine's Day! - Each Sunday morning, we repeat our church's covenant beginning with, "Love is the spirit of this church." Love can take different forms: love of friends and neighbors ("agape" love) and love of spouse or partner (romantic love). On this Valentine's Day, Rev. Rachel will share some thoughts and insights into the ups and downs of romantic love. Lay Worship Leader: Jenny Donahue.

February 21–Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher. "What We Love" – How can we learn to love what is good for us and for the world instead of shiny objects? - Lay Worship Leader: Kat Gillespie

February 28 –Worship with Rev. Richard Fewkes. "Organized Nostalgia" – Most of us have a desire to repeat and/or return to the past, to the way things used to be. The longing for the past can have both positive and negative connotations for the life of the church, even a liberal church. Lay Worship Leader: Stefan Michaud

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 5pm and write out *very short* announcements to be made before the service on the lay worship leader's form. Announcements start at **10:25**.

Worship Committee meeting: The next regular meeting of the Worship Committee is Tuesday, February 9 at 7:30pm 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.

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.

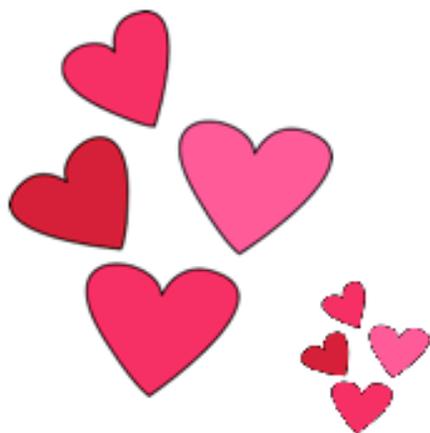
All regular business should be handled before or after the first week. Emergencies of course come up, and he understands that. You can reach Rev. Paul by email (psprecher@uuma.org) phone (phone: 781-774-0086).

Your help in protecting his time is appreciated.





LET'S *Grow* TOGETHER



Love is the spirit of this church
and service its gift.

This is our great covenant:
To dwell together in peace,
to speak the truth in love,
and to help one another.

It's hard to ignore Valentine's Day in February, especially when working with kids. We have some special Valentine's Day cards to be made this month during our One Room Schoolhouse! Who doesn't love handmade Valentine's Day cards?

If you can think of anyone who could use a thoughtfully made Valentine, please reach out to me at dre.bridgewater@gmail.com!

Have a lovely month,
Sara

IMPORTANT DATES

February 7	RE Classes	
February 14	ORSH	
February 21	RE Classes	Family Game Night @ 5 pm
February 28	RE Classes	

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 11	Everybody's Birthday Party
March 26	Holi Festival of Colors at Sri Radha Bakti in Holbrook

Curriculum started back up in January after the Winter Solstice Service! Here's a recap of January:

Pre-K through 2nd students are reading picture books that help to illustrate the Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism. Last month the group enjoyed Born with a Bang by Jennifer Morgan, discussing our interconnected relationship with the universe; Henry Builds a Cabin by D.B. Johnson, highlighting the idea of simplifying life; If I Were President by Catherine Stier, with an emphasis on taking care of the world. The group will be wrapping up the month by reading Stone Soup and participating in the church's Stone Soup potluck!

4th-6th Graders have been studying the lives of famous Unitarian Universalists and each week are encouraged to see the similarities in themselves — wondering how they may someday change the world, becoming another famous Unitarian Universalist. In January, the group discussed: Charles Dickens, James Pierpont, Beatrix Potter, and Tim Berners-Lee.

The Jr./Sr. High Youth have been spending many Sundays in church, worshipping with the congregation. The youth will be meeting two weeks a month to engage in the Principled Music curriculum, and the dates will be publicized in the weekly RE newsletter! This month the group has been discussing civil rights and studying the lyrics to songs which address this social justice issue.

We also held a One Room Schoolhouse in January, and we discussed the accomplishments of Martin Luther King, Jr. and worked collaboratively on a mural for the Hive!

FORUM | Islam and Syrian Refugees

Guest Speakers

Dr. John Robbins
Executive Director of CAIR

Legal Representative
Explain the rigorous vetting process

Ahmad Alkhalaf
9 year-old Syrian refugee

Dr. Abdulfatah Elshaar MD, Ph.D.
Syrian American Medical Society

Open to

Members of local religious congregations,
community residents, students and campus organizations

Sponsors

Bridgewater State University's
Catholic Center

First Parish Unitarian Universalist
Church of Bridgewater

Bridgewater State University's
Center for Middle East Studies

Bridgewater State University's
Muslim Student Association



Brunch | Presentation
11:30AM | 12:00PM

S u n d a y

2.7.2016

**First Parish Unitarian
Universalist Church**

50 School St., Bridgewater

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



February 6, 2016 at 8pm

Potluck dinner at 6:30pm

featuring

The Honey Dewdrops

Coming Attractions

March 5 — The Lords of Liechtenstein
and Pesky J Nixon (Split bill - \$15.00)
April 2 — Anni Clark
and Curt Bessette & Jenn Kurtz duo (Split bill)
May 7 — Susie Burke & David Surette
with Andy & Judy

Admission: \$15

*Enjoy our homemade
Refreshments*

Sign up for open mike!

Friends at First Parish:

The Dye family would like to thank you for your many many acts of kindness and positive thoughts on our difficult journey as John declined from an insidious disease. We so appreciate your continued support. You the people of First Parish exemplify our covenant....Love is the spirit of this church.... and to help one another. Thank you.

GREEN SANCTUARY COMMITTEE'S Green Tip of the Month Meat Free Monday!



Did you know you can significantly reduce your carbon footprint by eating vegetarian just one day a week? There are resources and recipes at Paul McCartney's website, www.meatfreemondays.com. It surprises many to know that the carbon emissions from the meat and dairy industry exceed carbon emissions from the transportation sector. Factory farming, from which virtually all meat products come from, is also a major environmental polluter, putting watersheds in jeopardy by discharging effluent and antibiotics into the ground water. There are so many reasons to go meat-free at least one day a week. Try it!

MAINSRING HOUSE LUNCHES

Monday, February 1 at 9am MainSpring House homeless shelter lunches will be prepared in the LPH. Volunteers and donations are always welcome.

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, February 4 at 7pm the Social Justice Committee will meet at the church. All members of the regular SJC are asked to attend. New members and visitors are welcome. Our discussions will include: plans for the Justice Sunday service on March 13, actions for programs on Immigrant Rights and Jobs not Jails, support for a MA constitutional amendment to raise taxes on income over \$1,000,000, and suggestions for the Share the Plate charities for the next few months. We will also be looking forward to UU Mass Action Advocacy Day in Boston on April 12 from 10am - 4pm.

SERRV SUNDAY

Sunday, February 14 Lydia Landim will have her SERRV Fair Trade items for sale at the church after Coffee Hour. Some of her offerings will make fine Valentine gifts.

T"UU"RNING LEAVES BOOK CLUB SPECIAL YOUTH MEETING

Friday, February 26 at 7pm the T"UU"rning Leaves Book Club will meet at the home of Betty Gilson. **The youth in Grades 7 - 12 are especially invited** to participate in this meeting. The book selection is *The Book Thief* by Marcus Zusack. It is listed as a Young Adult novel, but is of interest to adults as well. It is on the suggested reading list in many local Middle and High Schools. We will possibly be watching the movie made from the book. Let Betty Gilson know if you can attend and if you need transportation. (Refreshments always provided.)

It's just a small story really, about among other things: a girl, some words, an accordionist, some fanatical Germans, a Jewish fist-fighter, and quite a lot of thievery. . . .Set during World War II in Germany, Markus Zusack's groundbreaking novel is the story of Liesel Meminger, a foster girl living outside of Munich. Liesel scratches out a meager existence for herself by stealing when she encounters something she can't resist—books. With the help of her accordion-playing foster father, she learns to read and shares her stolen books with her neighbors during bombing raids as well as with the Jewish man hidden in her basement before he is marched to Dachau. This is an unforgettable story about the ability of books to feed the soul.

SHARE THE PLATE

The charity selected for February is the Massachusetts Bail Fund. This is a program to help the indigent who are in jail awaiting trial and have no money for bail. It will provide an administrator for Plymouth County. Here is some background information about the program...

THE MASSACHUSETTS BAIL FUND

The Massachusetts Bail Fund pays bail so that low-income people can stay free while they work towards resolving their case, allowing individuals, families, and communities to stay productive, together, and stable.

Massachusetts jails are filled with people awaiting trial simply because they cannot afford bail. Bail leads to longer incarcerations times, lost jobs, lost housing, and devastated families. The Massachusetts Bail Fund provides up to \$500 bail for low-income individuals.

HISTORY:

When someone is arrested in Massachusetts, a bail commissioner at the police station or a judge at the courthouse decides whether or not the individual will be required to provide money that will ensure that they return to court. This money is their bail. If they cannot afford it, they will be held in jail until their case is over.

According to Massachusetts Law, bail is meant to ensure that people return to court. But a group of defense attorneys and social workers noticed that it was instead keeping their clients behind bars. Many of their clients were spending months or years in jail awaiting the conclusion of their cases simply because they couldn't afford their bail, sometimes as little as \$50.00. As a result clients were forced out of their homes, jobs, and communities, making effective representation and treatment increasingly difficult. The Massachusetts Bail Fund was created to address this inequity. Using all donated funds, the Bail Fund provides up to \$500 bail for low-income individuals.

THE 'COST' OF BAIL:

Being held during the pretrial period has disastrous impacts on a person's life. Incarceration of even a few days can have a serious impact on defendants' families, housing, employment, and health. People are fired from jobs, evicted from public housing, dropped from public assistance, and kicked out of shelters. Students miss classes and parents lose custody of their children. Despite this cost, research shows that reliance on cash bail is no better than effective pretrial conditions or phone or mail reminders in ensuring that a defendant returns to court to address his or her case.

People who are held during the pretrial period are more likely to be convicted and receive harsher sentences than those who are released on bail. The longer a person stays in jail, the more likely he or she is to plead guilty to a crime simply because doing so would ensure release. The desire to go home is a powerful motivator and is used as a bargaining chip by the prosecution in order to push for a plea.

A defendant's ability to address legal charges while in the community rather than in jail results in better legal outcomes. The Massachusetts Bail Fund pays bail so that low-income people can stay free while they work towards resolving their case, allowing individuals, families, and communities to stay productive, together, and stable.

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!

First Parish Universalist Unitarian Church

50 School Street Bridgewater, MA



Saturday February 13th

6:00pm — 7:30pm

Serving:

Lasagna, Garlic Bread, Salad and Ice Cream!



\$9.00 Per Person or \$25.00 for Families!



Don't miss the *Door Prizes* and *Entertainment!*

February 2016 CALENDAR

Monday, February 1

9am MainSpring House lunches prep at FP

7:30pm Facilities Committee meeting

Thursday, February 4

5pm GLBT Dance at BSU Campus Center Ballroom

7pm Social Justice Committee to meet at First Parish

Saturday, February 6

8pm Off the Common Coffee House at First Parish

Sunday, February 7

10:30am Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher, "Desire/Grasping"

11:30am Islamic Forum at First Parish (program at 12 noon)

Monday, February 8

7:30pm Green Sanctuary Committee Meeting

Tuesday, February 9

5pm RE Committee Meeting

7:30pm Worship Committee meeting

Thursday, February 11

7pm Growth Team Meeting

Saturday, February 13

6pm Lasagna Supper at First Parish

Sunday, February 14

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Worship with Rev. **Rachel Tedesco, Valentine's Day!**

11:30am Servv Sunday—Fair Trade items on sale in the UPH

Monday, February 15

6:30pm Community Vespers for Peace , First Church West Bridgewater, 29 Howard St.

Wednesday, February 17

7pm Science and Religion Discussion Group at FP

Sunday, February 21

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher, "What We Love"

5pm Family Game Night at First Parish

Thursday, February 25

7:30pm Parish Committee will meet at First Parish

Friday, February 26

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

Sunday, February 28

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Worship with Rev. Richard Fewkes, "Organized Nostalgia"

Monday, February 29

9am MainSpring House lunches prep at FP

**First Parish Church
Unitarian Universalist**

50 School Street

Bridgewater, MA 02324

508-697-2525

www.firstparishbridgewater.org

firstparishbridgewater@hotmail.com

firstparishbridgewater.blogspot.com