

# BRIDGING



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

March 2016

## From the Minister...

### "Guilt"

The price we pay for our advance in civilization is a loss of happiness through the heightening of the sense of guilt.  
— Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930)

Freud would probably argue that guilt was heightened as civilization advanced and as rules became more elaborate. But it's clear that every civilization and hence every religion has acknowledged the reality of personal guilt. Perhaps sacrifices in more primitive societies were intended to propitiate the gods to ensure good harvests. By the time Moses and his successors wrote down the laws and other rules in the first five books of the Jewish Bible, though, the People of Israel were told to make sacrifices for personal wrongdoing as well as for wrongdoing by the whole community.

Yom Kippur in the Jewish tradition was instituted as a day on which a sacrifice would be offered for the sins of the whole people of Israel; one part of the custom was to choose a goat that was symbolically loaded with all the sins – hence all the guilt of the people – which was then driven out into the desert to carry all of their wrongdoings away from the people. From this practice comes our term "scapegoat" – that is, a person or a group that is blamed for all of our troubles; Muslims, for examples, or Jews in earlier times, or African Americans, illegal immigrants, criminals, and on and on. One convenient result of having a scapegoat is that it enables us to ignore our own shortcomings by projecting badness and wrongdoing on to the Other.

When in our first Unitarian Universalist Principle we affirm and promote the "inherent worth and dignity of every person," we are asserting that no one is Other, that all humans share both the good and bad aspects of our nature, and that all of us therefore have some of good and some of evil in us. As Alexander Solzhenitsyn puts it in *The Gulag Archipelago 1918-1956*:

If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?"

The Pilgrims and Puritans who founded our First and Second and Third Parishes in the towns of New England were all Calvinists who believed that human beings are *all* totally depraved – utterly sinful – and therefore rightly consigned to the flames of eternal hellfire, except for those few chosen by God through no virtue of their own for the joys of heaven. In other words, everyone is guilty and deserves eternal damnation because of the Original Sin that occurred in the Garden of Eden. Both our Unitarian and our Universalist forebears dissented from this dour view of human nature and focused instead on the ways we can choose to be and to do good as well as evil. We believe strongly that this is a choice, and in this we agree with the medieval Jewish philosopher Maimonides (1135–1204), who said:

We have been given free will. Any person can become as righteous as Moses or as wicked as Jeroboam. We ourselves decide whether to make ourselves learned or ignorant, compassionate or cruel, generous or miserly. No one forces us, no one decides for us, no one drags us along one path or the other; we ourselves, by our own volition, choose our own way.

But of course, there's still the fact that we don't always choose wisely; we don't always seek the good and avoid the bad. We all fall short of our own highest aspirations from time to time. So how do we as religious liberals process the guilt that inevitably follows when we choose the wrong?

Rosh Hashanah, the Days of Awe leading up to Yom Kippur, provide a time in the Jewish tradition of reflection, acknowledgement of wrongdoing and making amends where one has offended or done wrong. The forty days of Lent in the Christian tradition provide a similar time for reflection and amendment.

Our theme for March, then, considers how we might make use of such a time within our own religious tradition in light of our own faith traditions and commitments.

In Faith,  
Rev. Paul

## Minister

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## Religious Education Committee

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## Social Justice Committee

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## Membership Committee

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## Worship Services in March

### Worship Committee News

The theme for the month of March is "Guilt". The hymn of the month is "We Begin Again in Love" – Hymn #1037.

### Worship Services

March 6 – Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher. "Lent: Mindfulness and Self-Denial" – The traditional practice of the forty days of Lent calls on us to "give something up." Why should we? What should we? Lay Worship Leader: Karen Messing; Ushers: Liz & Tony Keeling.

March 13 – Worship with Laura Wagner, Director of UU Mass Action. "Social Justice as a Spiritual Practice." Worship Leader: Rev. Rachel Tedesco; Ushers: Janet Dye & Diane Roza

**AND** March 13 6:30 pm – Peace/Vespers Service Join us for a quiet time of reflection, singing and meditation; we're hosting local clergy and congregations here at First Parish. Our community did the first of these events last June just after the shootings at Mother Emanuel in Charlestown.

March 20 –Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher. "Stewardship: What Do We Owe?" We don't give to First Parish out of a sense of guilt, so – why should we give? Worship Leader: Member of the Stewardship Committee ; Ushers: Laurie Lessner & Sam Baumgarten

March 27 –Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher. "Easter & Resurrection -- & Spring!" There are many old stories for this time of year. What can we embrace from them? Lay Worship Leader: Sara Williams; Ushers: Pamela & James Hayes-Bohanan

**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](mailto: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 Thursday, March 17 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.

## 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 (phone: 781-774-0086).

Your help in protecting his time is appreciated.





# LET'S *Grow* TOGETHER



## FAMILY GAME NIGHT

We had so much fun at the family game night in February. We plan to host a family game night each month — we will keep you posted!



## IMPORTANT DATES

March 6	RE Classes
March 13	RE Classes
March 20	ORSH Youth Group @ 5 pm
March 27	Intergen — Easter

## UPCOMING EVENTS

March 11	Everybody's Birthday Party
April 2	Holi Festival of Colors at Sri Radha Bakti in Holbrook
April 3	Visit to Lucy Stone Cooperative \$10 per family

## FEBRUARY RECAP

February was a busy month in RE! The children and youth worked together on Valentines to create cards for members of the church, working in partnership with the Caring Committee.

### GRADES PRE-K-3

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

- In God's Name by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso
- Saint Valentine by Robert Sabuda
- The Golden Rule by Ilene Cooper

### GRADES 4-6

Discussed famous Unitarian Universalists and their contributions to the world:

- Peter Cooper
- Alexander Graham Bell
- Henry Bergh

### YOUTH GROUP

Listened to these songs and discussed the Social Justice topics addressed in the lyrics:

- Mean by Taylor Swift
- Don't Laugh at Me by Mark Wills
- Hey Bully by Morgan Frazier

## Get Fresh With a Local Farmer!!

## Join a CSA!!



For over 25 years, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) has been a popular way for consumers to buy local, seasonal food directly from a farmer.

Here are the basics: a farmer offers a certain number of "shares" to the public. Typically, the share consists of a box of vegetables, although some farmers include the option to buy shares of eggs, homemade bread, meat, cheese, fruit, flowers or other farm products along with their veggies. Sometimes several farmers will offer their products together, to offer the widest variety to their members. Interested consumers purchase a share (aka a "membership" or a "subscription") and in return receive a box (bag, basket) of seasonal produce each week throughout the farming season.

This arrangement creates several rewards for both the farmer and the consumer. Farmers get to spend time marketing their food early in the year, before their 16 hour days in the field begin. They receive payment early in the season, which helps with the farm's cash flow, and have an opportunity to get to know the people who eat the food they grow.

Consumers eat ultra-fresh food, with all the flavor and vitamin benefits, gain exposure to new vegetables and new ways of cooking, and usually get to visit the farm at least once a season. They develop a relationship with the farmer who grows their food and learn more about how food is grown. Many families find that their kids favor food from "their" farm, even veggies they've never been known to eat.

Interested? Check out these two sites for CSAs near you and get ready to enjoy fantastic, farm fresh food!

<http://www.agrilicious.org/home>

<http://www.localharvest.org/csa/>



## Off the Common Coffeehouse

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



### March 5, 2016 at 8pm

Potluck dinner at 6:30pm

*featuring*

### The Lords of Liechtenstein and Pesky J Nixon

#### Coming Attractions

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!*

## Working with Brockton Interfaith Community (BIC)

by the Rev. Rachel Tedesco

Since last September, I have served on the BIC Board of Directors, attending their monthly meetings. In addition, I am working with BIC on two major issues. Not coincidentally, because they are so timely, these are also top issues for UU Mass Action. We will be hearing from Laurie Wagner, the Director of UU Mass Action, at our Social Justice Committee service on March 13. (See the SJC article.)

**Ending Mass Incarceration.** The first major issue is reforming the criminal justice system in the **Jobs Not Jails** campaign. In 2015, the JNJ coalition introduced a broad Justice Reinvestment Act into the state legislature. The goal is to end mass incarceration and put funding instead into education, job training, drug and alcohol rehab and mental health services. The “hot” issue right now is helping ex-prisoners rebuild their lives by reinstating their drivers’ licenses upon release from prison.

Current state law makes all drug offenders released from prison wait up to 5 years to get their licenses back and then pay a \$500 fee. This is a huge barrier to getting a job, supporting one’s family and building a normal life. BIC is working with the Mass. Community Action Network (MCAN), UU Mass Action and other allies to change this. A subsection of the Justice Reinvestment Act is the RMV (Registry of Motor Vehicles) Sanctions Bill, which calls for elimination of this barrier. The Senate passed the model RMV Sanctions Bill as proposed by the coalition. But the House inserted an exemption for anyone accused of drug “trafficking”— even for a very small amount of drugs or being a minor accessory to a drug trade. These are not “drug lords” and this is a serious setback to our campaign. Both House and Senate versions are now in conference committee. If you would like to support Senate Bill 2021, call or write your state politicians to support this version of the bill. You may ask me about whom to call and what to say. And for more information, please visit the MCAN website at: <http://www.mcan-pico.org/events/jobs-not-jails-call-your-legislators/>

Also the UU Mass Action website at: <http://www.uumassaction.org/campaigns/prison-justice/>

**Immigration Reform.** The other area that BIC is working on is **justice for undocumented immigrants from Central America**. I wrote about the Trust Act and the Sanctuary City movement in the January issue of Bridging. This is to help protect immigrants from the actions of Immigrations and Customs Enforcement or ICE. Here is a brief update.

The unconstitutional actions of ICE in arresting, detaining and deporting undocumented immigrants without due process continue. The arrests are often done with the cooperation of local police departments and county sheriffs. This has severely eroded the trust between the immigrant communities and their police departments, making legitimate law enforcement more difficult.

BIC, MCAN and its allies are continuing the struggle to get ICE out of our communities and the criminal justice system. A MCAN rally was held outside of ICE headquarters in Burlington, MA on February 17 (the same day as Pope Francis’ visit to the Mexican border) as part of the ongoing campaign.

We found out recently that things may get worse. The Plymouth and Essex County Sheriffs are working on 287 (g) agreements with ICE to make it easier to enter into county prisons and local jails to interrogate prisoners and make arrests. BIC and the state-wide coalition will be working to stop this from going through.

If you would like to join in the campaign, please tell me. More information can be found at <http://www.mcan-pico.org/2015/08/immigration-reform/> Also at: <http://www.uumassaction.org/campaigns/immigration/>

Together we can make a difference!

## 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.*

## Class in Unitarian Universalism Sunday 3/6/2016

The second class in Unitarian Universalism will take place after the Sunday service on March 6. This class is taught by Rev. Paul and several lay leaders of the church and deals with First Parish and how our church works. The class is geared toward people who are thinking about joining First Parish, but future membership is definitely not a requirement. You are welcome to come simply to learn more about our church. Lunch will be provided. The class will be held in the Lower Parish Hall and will start right after the service

For those of you who missed the first class, which covered the history and principles of Unitarian Universalism, but are thinking of becoming members of First Parish, please contact Jan Thompson [JaniceThompson22@comcast.net](mailto:JaniceThompson22@comcast.net) (508) 697-2492 to get a copy of the text for the class "Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide".

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## Mitten Tree Donations

There were 50 hats, pairs of mittens and gloves that adorned this year's Mitten Tree. The donations were gratefully received by the Self Help, Inc. Head Start center in Brockton. Head Start serves children ages 3 to 5 from low-income families. Self Help, Inc. provides services to 31 communities including Bridgewater. Thank you all for your generosity!

~The RE Committee



## SHARE THE PLATE CHARITY

The March Share the Plate Charity is UU Mass Action our state UU advocacy group. Since 2006 UU Mass Action has had a history of mobilizing the 140 Unitarian Universalist congregations around social justice issues in Massachusetts. They focus their energy annually around three or four main campaigns each year. These are selected through: polling congregations, listening to community partners, assessing current legislative activity and evaluating who is most vulnerable in the communities of our state. The campaigns for 2016 are: Economic Justice, Ending Mass Incarceration, Environment/Climate Change, and Immigrant Rights.

Laura Wagner, the director of UU Mass Action will be our speaker at First Parish on Justice Sunday, March 13 she will be focusing on spirituality of *Social Justice as a Spiritual Practice*.

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## MAINSRING HOUSE LUNCHESES

March Mainspring House lunches are being made on Monday, February 29 at 9am in the LPH. April lunches will be prepared on Monday, April 4

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## FULL SOCIAL JUSTICE MEETING

Thursday, March 10 at 7pm a meeting of all the branches of the Social Justice Committee will be held at First Parish. We will be focusing on the Justice Sunday Service and the various issues with which we are involved. New members are welcome to attend. Contact Rev. Rachel Tedesco and/or Betty Gilson for more information.

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## T"UU"RNING LEAVES BOOK CLUB

Friday, April 1 at 7pm the T"UU"rning Leaves Book Club will meet (location TBD) to discuss the One Book One Community read *Life, Animated*.

Imagine being trapped inside a Disney movie and having to learn about life mostly from animated characters dancing across a screen of color. *A fantasy? A nightmare?* This is the real-life story of Owen Suskind, the son of the Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Ron Suskind and his wife, Cornelia. An autistic boy who couldn't speak for years, Owen memorized dozens of Disney movies, turned them into a language to express love and loss, kinship, brotherhood. The family was forced to become animated characters, communicating with him in Disney dialogue and song; until they all emerge, together, revealing how, in darkness, we all literally need stories to survive.

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## CARING COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, March 28 at 7pm the Caring Committee will meet at First Parish. If you have issues for the committee to pursue, contact a member.

Betty Gilson, Andrew Harding, Mary Hatfield, Louella Mann, JanThompson, Korin Zigler

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## SCIENCE & RELIGION DISCUSSION GROUP

There will be a meeting of the "Science and Religion" discussion group on Wednesday, March 16th at 7pm in the Upper Parish Hall. We will continue with "The Inflationary Universe" by Alan Guth.

All are welcome.

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## 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 [Janice-Thompson22@comcast.net](mailto:Janice-Thompson22@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



# Save the date to Weave the Sunshine!

Join your church friends on Saturday, March 19  
for our Stewardship Sunday-Eve Dinner.

Enjoy delicious food, prepared by the Stewardship Team

And lively conversation with your friends at First Parish.

Come and “Weave the Sunshine”!

Babysitting available upon request.

First Parish Church Bridgewater

Saturday, March 19, 2016

Gather 6pm

Dinner 6:30pm

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## Adult RE CLASS: Building Your Own Theology

Our next Adult Religious Education program will be held on six Tuesday evenings from 7:00-8:30 pm. We will be using an adult curriculum by Richard Gilbert that calls on us to think through our beliefs and to examine how our beliefs inform our lives. We will meet on March 8, 15, 22 & 29 and April 12 & 19.

“Building Your Own Theology” is an adult education course offered in Unitarian Universalist churches. Since our denomination does not have any test of faith or required beliefs and we covenant to affirm and promote a free and responsible search for truth and meaning, this class is designed to lead you through the kinds of questions and explorations that would lead you to be able to determine what it is that you personally believe about Life, Ultimate Reality (God), human beings and what is right, and then to take the step of expressing this in the form of a credo. Please contact Rev. Paul for more details and to sign up – or sign up after church (clipboard is on the bulletin board near the coffee).

# March 2016 CALENDAR

Monday, February 29

9am MainSpring House lunches prep at FP

Saturday, March 5

8pm Off the Common Coffee House at First Parish

**Sunday, March 6**

9am Choir Rehearsal

10:30am Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher. "Lent: Mindfulness and Self-Denial"

12noon Class in Unitarian Universalism—2nd in the series

6pm Game Night with the Grown-ups

Monday, March 7

7:30pm Facilities Committee meeting

Music Committee Meeting

Tuesday, March 8

7pm Adult RE Classes at First Parish, "Building Your Own Theology"

Thursday, March 10

7pm Meeting of the full Social Justice Committee

7pm Growth Team Meeting

Friday, March 11

6pm Everybody's Birthday Party

**Sunday, March 13**

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Worship with Laura Wagner, Dir. of UU Mass Action. "Social Justice as a Spiritual Practice."

6:30pm Peace/Vespers Service at First Parish

Monday, March 14

7:30pm Green Sanctuary Committee Meeting

Tuesday, March 15

2pm Shared Ministry Committee meeting at FP

7pm Adult RE Classes at First Parish, "Building Your Own Theology"

Wednesday, March 16

7pm Science and Religion Discussion Group at FP

Thursday, March 17

5:30pm RE Committee meeting at First Parish

7:30pm Worship Committee meeting in the church office

7:30pm Finance Committee meeting at the Hatfield's

Saturday, March 19

6pm Stewardship Dinner

**Sunday, March 20**

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher. "Stewardship: What Do We Owe?"

5pm Family Game Night at First Parish

Tuesday, March 22

7pm Adult RE Classes at First Parish, "Building Your Own Theology"

Thursday, March 24

7:30pm Parish Committee will meet at First Parish

**Sunday, March 27**

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher. "Easter & Resurrection -- & Spring!"

Monday, March 28

7pm Caring Committee meeting

Tuesday, March 29

7pm Adult RE Classes at First Parish, "Building Your Own Theology"

Friday, April 1

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

## First Parish Church Unitarian Universalist

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