

BRIDGING



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

May 2016

From the Minister...

"Blessing"

"I think a truly blessed life comes from: living with integrity; loving your work, most of the time; loving the people around you, most of the time; and loving yourself, most of the time."

- Soul Matters minister Rev. Claire Feingold Thoryn

"Blessing" is our theme for the month; here are a few thoughts from the leaders of our Soul Matters Sharing Circle:

When the world seems stingy to us, we are stingy to others. Those who feel blessed have little trouble sharing blessings with others.... As Rev. Don Wheat puts it "The religious person is a grateful person, and the grateful person is the generous person."

So this month the question in front of all of us is not simply "Do you notice the blessings all around you?" It's also, "How are the blessings in your life leading you to bless others?"

Bring a Friend! One of the blessings we CAN give others is the blessing of our community at First Parish. We welcomed seven new members on April 7th at our New Member Sunday this year. We've been blessed with over twenty guests in the course of this church year, and every one has experienced a warm welcome from all of us. Like many of our congregations, we consider ourselves – and really are! – friendly and welcoming.

But not everyone knows that. Kathleen Montgomery, longtime leader at our Unitarian Universalist Association, tells the story of how her brother, a lifelong Roman Catholic, converted to Unitarian Universalism on his deathbed. She was honored by his final act of integrity but also "sad that his life – so rich in most ways – had not been as religiously satisfying as his death. And conscious that the one person who might have changed that was ... me." She goes on:

This is what I have learned: For each time I don't reach out to someone who might join this faith, for each time I hesitate to be hospitable, out of shyness or solipsism, I may be leaving someone's life poorer than it might be.

We Unitarian Universalists can be very shy about inviting friends. We certainly don't want to give off even the slightest hint of proselytizing! And to speak of evangelizing (telling the good news about) our faith and our congregation – heresy! But think about why *you* are part of our beloved First Parish community of memory and hope. Think about the way we remembered on New Member Sunday that, "We Need One Another." Think about the blessings you receive at First Parish and the opportunities you have to give blessings to others. Why would you want to deny that to someone else who might also be blessed?

AND it's sometimes tough to ask someone to join you on a Sunday morning; it can also be a little tough to be the only visitor on a Sunday morning.... Which is why we're all going to do it together on **Bring a Friend Sunday, May 15th**. We'll be talking about Small Blessings; and since all of your friends will be inviting guests, you'll feel left out if you don't! Of course, you can bring a friend *any* Sunday, but May 15th would be a *really* good time to be brave, and generous, and kind – and to invite a friend or neighbor or relative to share the blessings we give one another here at First Parish.

In Faith,

Rev. Paul

Minister

Rev. Paul Sprecher
PSprecher@uuma.org
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Worship Services in May

The May worship theme for the month is "Blessing." The hymn for the month is "Gathered Here" Hymn #389.

May 1 – Worship with McKayla Hoffman & Tony Winters in an intergenerational Beltane service. Ushers are Sam Baumgarten & Stefan Michaud.

May 8 – Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher for Mother's Day: "Bless this Family" - Remembering, Honoring, and Encouraging mothering by all. Lay Worship Leader is Betty Gilson; Ushers are Louella Mann & Pat Hart.

May 15 – **Bring a Friend Sunday.** Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher: "Small Blessings" - Learning to notice the little things that buoy us up if only we take the time to pay attention. Lay Worship Leader is Karen Messing; Ushers are Debbie Baumgarten & Susan St. Thomas.

May 22 – Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher: "Blessing the World" - As we receive, so we are able to give. Finding the sources of gratitude that allow us to be generous to others and to our world. Lay Worship Leader is Bob Messing; Ushers are Tony Winters & McKayla Hoffman.

May 29 – Worship with Rev. Rachel Tedesco on Memorial Day: "An Iwo Jimo Eulogy" – A 1945 eulogy by the renowned Rabbi Roland B. Gittelsohn, the first Jewish Marine Chaplain. Lay Worship Leader TBD. Ushers are Janet Dye & Quentin Jarvis.

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), 508-944-6436(cell) or email her at revrayted@comcast.net.

Worship Committee meeting: The next regular meeting of the Worship Committee is Thursday, May 19 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.

A note from the Parish Committee: Our Covenant and Communication

Many of the bullet points in our First Parish Covenant speak to communication—speaking honestly and directly, avoiding gossip, listening sensitively and patiently, keeping an open mind, tolerating differences, etc. The PC wants to remind all congregants of two key ways of keeping lines of communication open. First, it is good to remember that all meetings of all committees are open meetings. Anyone is welcome to sit in, listen to discussions, and offer feedback within the boundaries and agenda of the meeting as determined by the committee chair. Note that the minutes of committee meetings, which typically include the next meeting time and names of members, as well as a listing of all committees with their charters and work for the year, are available on the Members Only section of the web site.

Second, we have an active Shared Ministry Committee. Current members are David Tedesco, David Wilson, and Pam Hayes-Bohanan. One of this Committee's tasks is to serve as a sounding board or listening post for any issues or concerns that a member wishes to share.

So...take advantage of these opportunities to be heard—attend a meeting or speak to an SMC member—and help maintain open lines of communication.



LET'S *Grow* TOGETHER

IMPORTANT DATES

May 1	Intergen
May 8	RE Classes
May 15	RE Classes
May 22	RE Classes

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN RE

The Pre-K through 3rd Grade students engaged in the Picture Book UU curriculum during the month of April.

During their RE session, they read Owen & Mzee, the True Story of a Remarkable Friendship by Isabella Hatkoff, Craig Hatkoff and Dr. Paula Kahumbu

The 4th-6th Graders and the Youth Group joined together this month and worked on their Famous Unitarian Universalist studies and project.

Each member of the class interviewed another to begin a compilation of the famous Unitarian Universalists in our RE program and in the congregation.

You may be asked for an interview, too!

All Grades combined together in April for a One Room Schoolhouse on stewardship. An offering will now be part of each RE class.

YOUNG FAMILIES PLAYGROUP



First Parish has been holding a young families playgroup on Tuesday mornings from 10:00-11:30.

There will be activities each week for infants through preschoolers!

HOLI FESTIVAL

Members of First Parish attended the Holi Festival of Colors at Sri Radha Bahkti in Holbrook on April 2nd.



LUCY STONE COOPERATIVE VISIT



On April 3rd, First Parish members visited the Lucy Stone Cooperative in Boston!

The group toured this intentional community, where they live the values and tradition of Unitarian Universalism through cooperative home ownership.

Through shared resources and faithful action, this group aligns their daily lives with their core values of sustainability, spiritual practice, and social change.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

We are very pleased to welcome 7 new members to our congregation who signed the First Parish Register during the "New Member Ceremony" on April 17, 2016. In case you missed the ceremony, here are short bios of each of our new members:



Pearl Cohen

Pearl was raised Jewish in Newton, Mass. She has been a member of the Brockton Universalist Unitarian Church in Brockton for about 20 years. The Brockton church buried her son Randy who died of Ewing's Sarcoma, a rare bone cancer, at the age of 19 – he died on April 17, 1997. He died at home, and Pearl witnessed his crossover. How fitting then, that she makes her crossover to the First Parish UU Church of Bridgewater – today, on April 17, 2016 – on the 19th anniversary of Randy's death.

Tony Winters

Tony Winters has been a part of First Parish since December 2014, and is a member of the choir, Worship Committee, Music Committee, and Growth Committee. He also is the assistant accompanist for the church.

Outside of church, Tony is a songwriter and musician, as well as an author of novels and plays. His current major works include a trilogy of "spiritual thrillers" called *Kingsblood* and a Shamelessly Unitarian Universalist choral interpretation of the bible's book of revelations. He graduated from Bridgewater State University last Spring with Bachelor's degrees in Sociology and Geography. He is excited to be able to share the future with all of you, and to officially become a part of the family.

Tony Keeling

Tony's extended family is based in the Norfolk, VA area. He's a transplant to New England as a result of meeting his children's Mom while attending the University of Rhode Island, from which he earned a BA in Sociology, class of 1990. He is blessed with 3 children, ages 21, 18 and 15. He is in his 21st year of employment with the Dept of Mental Health. Tony was raised in the Baptist church, but began questioning his convictions in his teenage years, and have been on a quest for spiritual actualization ever since.

Jon Babcock

Jon Babcock was born and raised on the south shore and is the husband of Kristen Babcock and father to their two children, Connor and Eowyn. Jon was brought up in the UU tradition at First Parish in Norwell, MA and is returning to the fold after several decades of Christmas/Easter churchgoing. A recent transplant to East Bridgewater after living with his family for many years in Somerville, Jon is an attorney and enjoys reading, music and the outdoors.

Kristen Babcock

Kristen was raised without any formal religious upbringing. After moving to East Bridgewater from Somerville, she's happy to have found a community of caring, like-minded individuals where her family, including her husband Jon and her children Connor and Eowyn can grow here at First Parish, where she has already become involved in the Religious Education program.

Yasmeen Thompson

Yasmeen Thompson is an anthropology and public archeology major at Bridgewater State University. She has been a solitary pagan for six years. She is a liberal and a feminist. She loves the environment and spent four years studying environmental science and sustainability. Her greatest principle in life is putting love above everything else. Growing up in the Catholic and Jehovah's Witness faiths have made her hesitant to churches but she was drawn in because of the rainbow flag and the music at the annual hymn sing, and she stayed because first parish is a liberal, accepting, loving community and congregation. She has participated in the yule service and looks forward to bringing a pagan perspective and helping hand wherever she can.

Elizabeth Keeling

Elizabeth Keeling is a junior at Bridgewater State University obtaining a bachelor's degree in psychology and a minor in English. She is involved in organizations and paid positions that help students and individuals with learning and/or developmental disabilities. She also volunteers for an organization that raises awareness of depression and other mental health issues, with a teen outreach component. She plans to combine her will to help others with mental and developmental challenges and her zeal for writing to become a grant/advocacy writer for a nonprofit mental health organization in the future. Spiritually, Elizabeth was raised Catholic, but eventually discovered that the ways of its creed were too conservative for her. She began attending the UU Church of North Easton in 2011 and participated in their coming of age program, and has been in love with both the people and teachings of UU ever since. Within the last couple of years, she has become a part of the Bridgewater congregation and has the same appreciation for what it has to offer. She can't wait to officially become a member of such a loving, kind, and open-minded community.

"BRING A FRIEND SUNDAY" MAY 15, 2016

Many of us at First Parish consider our church to be a second home and the people here to be like family. We all may have had very different reasons for coming to First Parish but we have all stayed for the sense of community we feel here. Wouldn't it be nice to offer this feeling of acceptance and encouragement toward spiritual growth to others in our lives who might benefit from them? Has someone you know asked you about Unitarian Universalism or about which church you attend and why you chose First Parish? The best answer might be to show them! We would like to encourage all of you to bring a friend with you to any of our Sunday services but especially on "Bring a Friend Sunday" on May 15. They will find a welcoming atmosphere and support for themselves in their spiritual journey. What better gift can you offer a friend?

GREEN SANCTUARY COMMITTEE'S Green Tip of the Month DOWN THE DRAIN



DID YOU KNOW???????

If your toilet is from 1992 or earlier, you probably have an inefficient model that uses between 3.5 to 7 gallons per flush. Newer high-efficiency toilets use less than 1.3 gallons per flush. Older showerheads can use 3 gallons per minute or more. New efficient models use 2 gallons per minute or less. A family of 4 using a low-flow showerhead instead of a full-flow model can save about 20,000 gallons of water per year!!! A full bathtub requires about 70 gallons of water, while taking a 5 minute shower uses only 10-25 gallons.!!

UPDATED FIRST PARISH DIRECTORY

Attached to your May "Bridging" is the latest edition of the First Parish Directory. Please download the directory and/or print a copy for yourself. Please also check the info under your entry in the directory for any errors or any changes you would like to make and contact Jan Thompson with these changes JaniceThompson22@comcast.net (508) 697-2492. The directory is also available on the members only section of the First Parish website www.firstparishbridgewater.org

Save
THE
DATE

First Parish Church

ANNUAL MEETING



INSIGHT MEDITATION SANGHA

Curious about meditation? Trying to meditate or a regular practitioner?
You may be aware that beginning and sustaining a meditation practice on one's own can be challenging.
Sharing the practice with others can help.

A community of friends committed to study, practice and one another,
a Sangha, is forming at the First Parish Church Unitarian Universalist in Bridgewater.

Please join us as we begin to practice together
Wednesday Evenings from 7:00 to 8:30 PM on May 11th and 25th, June 8th and 22nd.

Tom Tanguay will facilitate. Tom has practiced and studied Insight meditation for over 20 years at the Insight Meditation Society, Barre Center for Buddhist Studies, and Empty Sky Sangha. He is a member of the Institute for Meditation and Psychotherapy and Spiritual Directors International. He is currently facilitating a Sangha at the Unitarian Universalist Society of Middleboro, teaching at Maha Yoga Center for Stress Management, and offering Mindfulness Based Spiritual Direction to individuals.

Please let Rev. Paul (minister@firstparishbridgewater.org) know if you're interested and haven't signed up yet.
The maximum that can be accommodated is 20.

A stylized, cursive logo for the word "Sangha". The letters are fluid and interconnected, with a large, sweeping 'S' and 'a' at the beginning, and a long, trailing 'a' at the end.

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

Nurturing the Creativity in You

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

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

Saturday May 7, 2016

9:30am – 3:30pm

The First Universalist Society of Franklin (FUSF)

262 Chestnut Street, Franklin Ma 02038

For details and registration go to www.uuwomensphere.com

MAY SHARE THE PLATE

The share the plate charity for May will continue to be "Kids to Camp", the annual charity sponsored by the Green Sanctuary. Half the undesignated collection at the Sunday worship service each week will be donated to this scholarship program. This is the environmental justice program to send as many children from low income families as possible to Sheep Pasture Nature Camp in Easton.

MAINSRING HOUSE LUNCHES

Monday, May 2 at 8:30 am MainSpring House lunches will be prepared in the LPH. Donations and volunteers always welcome. Speak with Betty Gilson to offer help.

FULL SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, May 5 at 7pm the full Social Justice Committee will meet at the church to share brief reports from all branches and to discuss ongoing plans. New members welcome. Contact Betty Gilson or Rev. Rachel Tedesco.

T"UU"RNING LEAVES BOOK CLUB

Friday, May 6 at 7pm location TBD the Book Club will meet to discuss *A Confederacy of Dunces* by John Kennedy Toole, an American comic masterpiece. Toole's hero, one Ignatius J. Reilly, is "huge, obese, fractious, fastidious, a latter-day Gargantua, a Don Quixote of the French Quarter. His story bursts with wholly original characters, denizens of New Orleans' lower depths, incredibly true-to-life dialogue, and the zaniest series of high and low comic adventures". Come join the conversation.

CARING COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, May 23 at 7pm location TBD the Caring Committee will meet. If you have issues to be addressed by the committee, please contact a member.

Betty Gilson, Andrew Harding, Mary Hatfield, Louella Mann, Janice Thompson, Korin Zigler.

DEADLINE

Tuesday, May 31, 2016

is the last day for all committee chairs
to submit their reports for the
ANNUAL MEETING to be held on 6/11/14.

NO EXCEPTIONS!

Thank you in advance for
adhering to this deadline.

Send to
firstparishbridgewater@hotmail.com

Saturday, May 7 is Metal Recycling Day at First Parish!!

9:00 to noon
in the First Parish parking lot

Sponsored by the Green Sanctuary Committee I
n conjunction with KeyforHope

All proceeds benefit
the Bridgewater Food Pantry!

For more information, or to volunteer your help,
please contact Debbie Baumgarten
at catsmeowg08@verizon.net or 508-697-6848.



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 **MAINSRING 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*



Saturday, May 7, 2016 at 8pm

Potluck dinner at 6:30pm

featuring

Susie Burke & David Surette

with Andy & Judy

Admission \$13

Dual BSU Graduation Parking Fundraiser

This year, BSU is holding 2 graduation ceremonies on Saturday, May 14. First Parish will hold its Parking Fundraiser but we need your help! Volunteers are needed to collect money and direct cars.

Please contact Tom St. Thomas for more information at 508.697.8637 or street8637@yahoo.com. Or Frank Yeatman at 508-279-3955 or fryleen@verizon.net

DOUBLE CEREMONY= DOUBLE VOLUNTEERS

Please help out if you can...



MAY 2016 CALENDAR

Sunday, May 1

9am Choir Practice

10:30am Beltane Service with McKayla Hoffman and Tony Winters

Monday, May 2

9am MainSpring House lunches prep at FP

7:30pm Facilities Committee meeting

Thursday, May 5

7pm Meeting of the full Social Justice Committee at the church

Friday, May 6

11am Mass Bail Fund meeting in First Parish UPH

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

Saturday, May 7

9am-noon 6th Annual Town-wide Metal Recycling at First Parish

9am-noon All-Church Clean-up at FP

8pm Off the Common Coffeehouse featuring Susie Burke & David Surette with Andy & Judy

Sunday, May 8

9am Choir Practice

10:30am Mother's Day Service with Rev. Paul Sprecher, "Bless This Family"

6pm Adult Game Night at First Parish

Monday, May 9

7:30pm Green Sanctuary Committee Meeting

Wednesday, May 11

8:30pm Insight Meditation Sangha at FP

Thursday, May 12

7pm Growth Team Meeting

Saturday, May 14

BSU Graduation Parking Fundraiser

Sunday, May 15

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Bring a Friend to Church Service with Rev. Paul Sprecher, "Small Blessings"

Tuesday, May 17

7pm Council Committee Meeting at First Parish

Wednesday, May 18

7pm Science and Religion Discussion Group at FP

Thursday, May 19

7:30pm Worship Committee meeting in the church office

Saturday, May 21

14th Annual Goods & Services Auction

6 pm - Wine & Cheese, Silent Auction, & Table Raffle

7 pm - Live Auction with Jenny Donahue as auctioneer

Sunday, May 22

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher, "Blessing the World"

Monday, May 23

7pm Caring Committee will meet; location TBD

Wednesday, May 25

8:30pm Insight Meditation Sangha at FP

Thursday, May 26

7:30pm Parish Committee Meeting in the UPH of First Parish

Sunday, May 29

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Memorial Day Service with Rev. Rachel Tedesco, "An Iwo Jimo Eulogy"

Tuesday, May 31

Deadline for all Committee Chairs to submit reports for the First Parish Annual Meeting

First Parish Church Unitarian Universalist

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