

BRIDGING



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

October 2015

From the Minister...

"Living in Awe"

"Two things fill the mind with ever-increasing wonder and awe, the more often and the more intensely the mind of thought is drawn to them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me."
— Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*

The ocean (with its vastness and its restless, boundless energy) and mountains in their majesty are among the things that inspire awe in most of us. I fear we have lost some of the awe of the heavens Kant experienced two hundred years ago, perhaps in part because the heavens at night are to some extent obscured by the light pollution with which most of us live. The experiences of *vastness* we feel when confronting these aspects of nature lift us out of our daily-ness and expose us to the reality of our own smallness in relation to these wonders. For some, this leads to the conclusion that we are insignificant. For me, it is a reminder of what a great and wonderful web of life we are a part, as our 7th Unitarian Universalist principle puts it.

This experience of awe and the feelings it evokes within us as we find ourselves part of its wonder has been referred to in many different ways. Freud spoke of the experience (which he saw as underlying all religious experiences) as the "oceanic feeling." Rudolph Otto, an eminent German theologian and philosopher, refers to the experience as *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* – something "wholly other" that is entirely different from anything we experience in ordinary life which also has a quality of being merciful and gracious.

Many translations of the Jewish Bible (known among Christians as the "Old" Testament) refer to individual's experiences of the presence of the sacred by referring to "the fear of God." I have learned from my Rabbinic friends in our interfaith study group that the Hebrew is much better translated as "awe" – as in the occasion when Jacob saw a ladder leading up to heaven with angels ascending and descending, or when Moses turned aside to see the burning bush.

All religious traditions refer in some way to this experience of awe in the face of that which is much greater than each of us as human beings. We will explore this aspect of our spiritual lives as our theme for October. While this is a common human experience, it is referred to by many different names and explained with many different stories of gods and of magnificence in the universe and of personal and impersonal sacredness. As we practice opening ourselves to recognizing opportunities for awe, we will find ourselves growing spiritually as we connect to what our UU Principles and Purposes refer to as the first source of our Living Tradition:

"Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life."

In Faith,
Rev. Paul

Minister

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Worship Committee News

The theme for the month of October is *Awe*. The hymn of the month is "Hush", #1040 in the *Singing the Journey* hymnal.

Worship Services:

October 4 –Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher. "Rediscovering Awe:" *The American Transcendentalists*, especially Ralph Waldo Emerson, infused new life into a hidebound Unitarianism by championing direct experience in religion. We can follow their example. The Lay Worship Leader is Tom St. Thomas; Ushers are McKayla Hoffman & Tony Winters.

October 11 –Worship with guest preacher, Rev. Dr. Robert Ross. The Lay Worship Leader will be Eileen Hiney; Ushers are Korin Zigler & Bob Koskey.

October 18 – Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher. "Religious Experience:" It can be tempting to think there can be only one true religion (usually the one we follow). But in fact our responses to religion and the sacred are as varied as our personalities. Lay Worship Leader is Vernon Domingo; Ushers are Deb Poesepp & Deb Giokas

October 25 – Hymn Sing worship with the Music Committee. Lay Worship Leader is Korin Zigler; Ushers are Frankie Finnegan & Kathy Keenan.

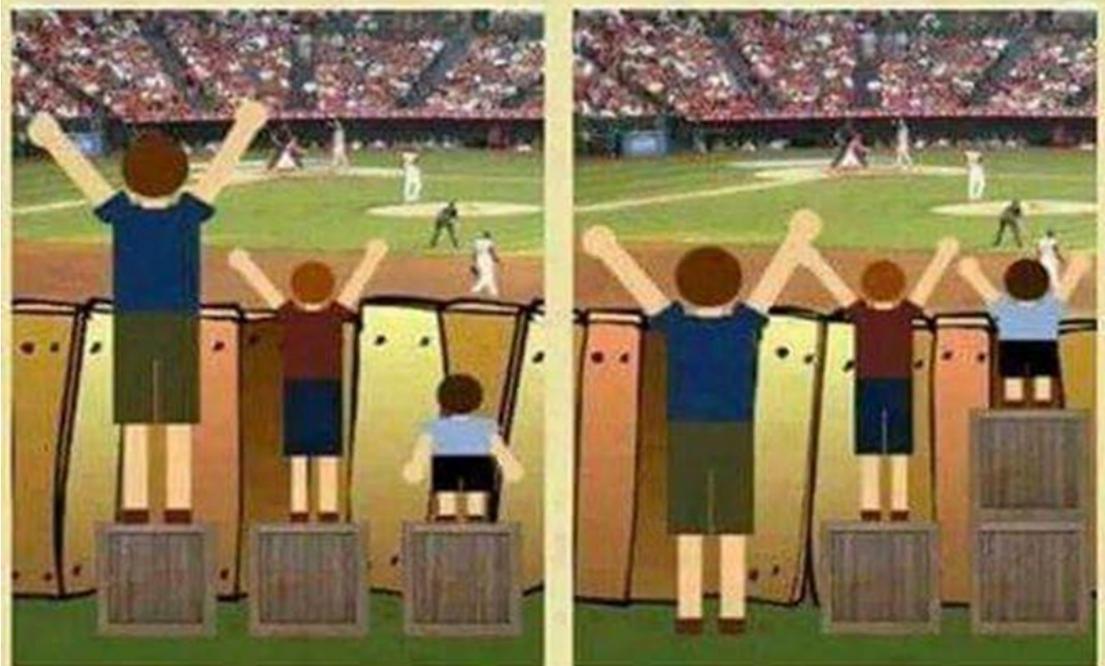
Note to Worship Associates, Lay Worship Leaders & Ushers.

Rev. Rachel or another worship committee member will be calling during the week to remind you of your assigned date. But if you cannot fulfill the role on this date, please let Rev. Rachel know as soon as possible. (And try to find a substitute if you can.) Phone her at: 508-378-3904 (home phone) or 508-944-6436 (cell phone) or email revrayted@comcast.net.

Worship Committee meeting: The next regular meeting of the Worship Committee is Thursday, October 15 in the church office. Meetings are open and 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.

Equality doesn't mean Justice



Equality

Justice



RE News

October, 2015



Hello All,

I am excited to be back into the swing of things and am thrilled to start RE classes! We have some amazing curriculum for all ages.

We kicked off the church year with exciting intergenerational services, which are so important for the children to participate with people of all ages and to learn about Unitarian Universalism.

All ages participated in Water Communion on September 13th, and Peace Sunday on September 20th including a One Room Schoolhouse, and culminating in inter-generational activities on the common.

The upcoming curriculum has all of the teachers excited, and we can't wait to share the experiences with all of the children and youth.

Read on to learn more!

Peace,
Sara

Preschool-3rd

The preschool through third graders will be engaging in *Picture Book UU* curriculum which was written by Katie Tweedie-Covey who has been a DRE since 1984, and has been writing UU curriculum since 1998.

The group will start off the RE year with [The Big Orange Splot](#) by D. Manus Pinkwater and continue into October with a study around UU Principles through the following picture books:

[Old Turtle](#) by Douglas Wood
[Henry Builds a Cabin](#) by D.B. Johnson
[Owen and Mzee](#) by Isabella Hatkoff
[To Everything There is a Season](#) by Leo and Dianne Dillon

Sonia D'Alarcao and Tom St. Thomas will be leading this group in the Lower Parish Hall.

4th-6th

The 4th-6th graders will also be working on curriculum created by Kate Tweedie-Covey, called *Spirit of Adventure*. The curriculum is written for active and adventurous children and youth!

The curriculum is sorted into units of study, and those units include Sports; Medicine; Food; Holidays; Science; Building; Exploring; and the Web of Life.

In October, the group will be diving into the Sports unit of the curriculum!

Jenny Donahue will be teaching this class with rotating coverage from assistant teachers in the Upper Parish Hall.

Jr. / Sr. High

The Junior and Senior High Youth group will be working on a curriculum called *Principled Music*. The youth will be studying Social Justice issues while discussing popular culture in the music.

The first sessions include the following songs:

Opus 1: "Imagine"
Social Justice Issue: Making Social Change
Opus 2: "The world is black, the world is white"
Social Justice Issue: Racism
Opus 3: "People everywhere just got to be free"
Social Justice Issue: Racism
Opus 4: "We shall overcome"
Social Justice Issue: Civil Rights

Pete Jacobson and Korin Zigler will be leading this group with floating assistant teachers in the Lower Parish kitchen area until the Hive is ready!

Please consider volunteering to assist these awesome classes once a month!

Mandated Reporting Training

Thursday, October 15, 2015 from 6:00-7:00 p.m. at First Parish.

Nancy Horber from the Department of Children and Families (DCF) will inform us on how to report suspected child abuse or neglect, warning signs to look for, and our responsibility as mandated reporters.

This training is essential for RE and Youth Group teachers, assistants, staff, and chaperones. Even if you aren't currently teaching or chaperoning, please consider attending in case you choose to work with the children in the future. The training aligns with our Safe Congregations Policy that is being finalized.

All are welcome to attend. Please RSVP to Sonia D'Alarcao at sdalarcao@hotmail.com by October 12th so that Nancy can prepare a sufficient amount of materials.

~The RE Committee



SCIENCE AND RELIGION DISCUSSION GROUP

There will be a meeting of the 'Science and Religion Discussion Group' on Wednesday October 21, at 7pm in the Upper Parish Hall. All are invited.



Off the Common Coffeehouse

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



October 3, 2015 at 8pm

Potluck dinner at 6:30pm

Featuring Greg Greenway

Coming Attractions

November 7 — Hungrytown with Diane Battistello
December 5 — RiLeY CoYoTe with Cardboard Ox
January 2 — Low Lily with Robin O'Herin
February 6 — The Honey Dewdrops (\$15.00)
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: \$13

*Enjoy our homemade
Refreshments*

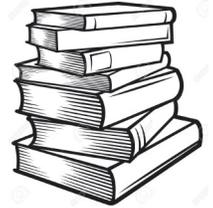
Sign up for open mike!

SHARE THE PLATE CHARITY FOR OCTOBER

The October Share the Plate Charity will be Brockton Interfaith Community (BIC). Half of the undesignated collection for those two months will be donated to BIC. First Parish is now a member of this faith based advocacy group which is working for issues that are close to the hearts of people at First Parish. Our community minister Rev. Rachel Tedesco is a member of the BIC Board. Please refer to her report in the Sept. issue of *Bridging* to learn more about BIC's activities and how you can help with its work. Also, consider joining the Social Justice Committee to work on the issues supported by BIC.

T"UU"RING LEAVES BOOK CLUB

Friday, October 30 at 7pm the T"UU"ring Leaves Book Club will meet at the home of Mary and Gordon Hatfield, 492 N. Central Street, East Bridgewater. Join us for a pre-Halloween mystery event to discuss *A Slight Trick of the Mind* by Mitch Cullen. It is 1947, and the long-retired Sherlock Holmes, now 93, lives in a remote Sussex farmhouse with his housekeeper and her young son. He tends to his bees, writes in his journal, and grapples with the diminishing powers of his mind. But in the twilight of his life, as people continue to look to him for answers, Holmes revisits a case that may provide him with answers of his own to questions he didn't even know he was asking—about life, about love, and about the limits of the mind's ability to know.



HEADS UP

Our Annual Coming Out Day Pot Luck will be held in November in conjunction with The LGBTQA Office at Bridgewater State University. Watch the weekly messages for the date.

Reasons to join the First Parish Bridgewater Choir:

1. You're running out of clean clothes and wearing those dashikis would solve that problem!
2. You've always wanted to know who sits in the back pews but were afraid to turn around.
3. You will always have a reserved seat during the Candlelight Service.
4. It's like singing in the shower except you're wearing clothes and people actually listen to you.
5. You get to be loud.
6. Sitting in a group is good practice if you ever get selected for jury duty.
7. All those tenor jokes will finally make sense.
8. You never know...the choir director may decide to take the choir on tour in Europe!
9. The Offertory collectors always skip the choir.
10. We need you, we want you!

But seriously folks, we are looking for a few new members. No experience necessary! The choir rehearses on Sunday morning from 9 to 10. If you would like to join, please e-mail Denise at denisehasking@comcast.net.



HYMN SING SERVICE

Mark your calendars, our annual Hymn Sing service will be October 25! The most popular hymns will be sung that day, but in order for me to know which hymns are the most well loved, YOU need to tell me your favorites! Please e-mail denisehaskins@comcast with anywhere from 1 to 5 of your favorites! I will keep track of them and we will sing the most often named hymns.

Working for Social Justice - by Rev. Rachel Tedesco, Community Minister

The next general meeting of the Social Justice Committee is scheduled for Thursday, October 8 at 7:00 p.m. in the Lower Parish Hall. Committee's branches will be reporting on their recent activities and plans for the coming church year.

Save the Date: Wednesday, October 14 at 11 a.m. for the Joint Judiciary Committee Hearing on Jobs NOT Jails omnibus legislation, the Justice Reinvestment Act, at 1 pm.

Join the Jobs NOT Jails Coalition at 11:00 am for a short rally and meeting with our legislators prior to the hearing.

The entire Justice Reinvestment Act, S.64/H.1429, will be heard for the first time by the Joint Judiciary Committee on the 14th at 1 pm in the State House. This includes the provisions on jobs, changing some felonies into misdemeanors, ending \$500 fines on ex-prisoners getting their driver's licenses back, compassionate release. (The bill includes repeal of Mandatory Minimum sentences, but that part was heard June 9.)

The JNJ Coalition hopes to replicate the success of the June 9th action and once again will rally inside the Statehouse prior to the hearing.

Members of the Brockton Interfaith Community (BIC) will be joining with others from the JNJ Coalition for this event. You are invited to join me (Rev. Rachel) to travel to Boston by commuter rail and the T for this. Email: revrayted@comcast.net or phone 508-944-6436.

More details can be found at: jobsnotjails.org/jnj/

Circle Dinner Sign-Up

So, our new church year is in full swing and fall is in the air. Time for sharing memories and renewing relationships with those we have missed over the summer. A great way to strengthen friendships, old and new, is to participate in one of our First Parish Circle Dinners. 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. Our fall round of Circle Dinners will be held **Fridays and Saturdays October 23 & 24 and November 6 & 7**. 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 JaniceThompson22@comcast.net (508) 697-2492 or any member of the Membership Committee: Mary Hatfield, Karen Messing, Bob Messing, Susan Irish, Susan Holten, or Louella Mann



GREEN TIP OF THE MONTH

Recycle Plastic Film - Collect that plastic and take it to a handy local recycle location. Yup, one more thing to wash, collect and remember to deposit but one by one we **can** make a difference.

For more information visit this website: <http://www.plasticfilmrecycling.org>

What:

- Bags like Ziploc® brand (clean and dry)
- Plastic grocery bags
- Newspaper bags
- Dry-cleaning bags
- Bread bags and produce bags
- Toilet paper, napkin and paper-towel wraps
- Plastic shipping envelopes
- All clean bags labeled #2 or #4

Where:

- Roche Brothers Supermarkets
- Lowe's
- Wal-Mart Supercenter
- Container Recycling Alliance, Lakeville
- Hannaford Supermarkets
- Target
- JCPenney
- Shaw's



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.*

October 2015 CALENDAR

Saturday, October 3

8pm Off the Common Coffeehouse featuring Greg Greenway

Sunday, October 4

9am Choir Practice

10:30am Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher

Monday, October 5

9am MainSpring House lunches prep at FP

7:30pm Facilities Committee meeting

Sunday, October 11

10:30am Worship with Rev. Dr. Robert Ross

Monday, October 12

7:30pm Green Sanctuary Committee Meeting

Thursday, October 15

5:30pm RE Committee meeting

6pm Mandated Reported Training at First Parish

7:30pm Worship Committee meeting

7:30pm Finance Committee will meet at the Hatfield's

Sunday, October 18

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher

GSC will be showing **Tapped** following today's service

Tuesday, October 20

2pm Shared Ministry meeting

Wednesday, October 21

7pm Science and Religion Discussion Group at FP

Thursday, October 22

7:30pm Parish Committee meeting in the UPH

Friday, October 23

Circle Dinner

Saturday, October 24

Circle Dinner

Sunday, October 25

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Hymn Sing Service

Friday, October 30

7pm T"UU"rning Leaves Book Club will meet at the home of Gordon and Mary Hatfield

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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.