

# BRIDGING



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

July/August 2016

## From the Minister...

### "Joy and Woe"

Joy and woe are woven fine, A clothing for the soul divine,  
Under every grief and pine, Runs a joy with silken twine.  
It is right it should be so, We were made for joy and woe,  
And when this we rightly know, Through the world we safely go. ~ William Blake

Most of you are aware that my wife Deedee has been struggling with uterine cancer over the past month. I have obviously been preoccupied with her care, including multiple hospitalizations at Brigham and Womens'/Dana Faber; and regrettably less presence at First Parish than I would prefer. I am very fortunate that our congregation is extremely self-reliant, and that I have colleagues and members of the congregation who have been able to lead services while I was preoccupied with caring for Deedee.

She and I have been extremely fortunate in our lives together; but it has not been without challenges, including occasional conflicts between the two of us, some troubles in the course of raising our two sons, and some recent health challenges for both of us – a bout with colon cancer for Deedee in December of 2014 (not apparently related to the current cancer), and a knee replacement at the end of April; and my shoulder surgery last September.

And now this. The story of Job has been invoked on occasion by both of us for this episode. Inevitably, the questions come unbidden: "Why me?" "I've been so careful to eat well, take supplements, maintain health as well as possible – what have I done wrong?" "Is this some genetic condition that I've inherited as a kind of curse?" "Why did I ever have that knee replacement, which masked these symptoms?"

I know many of you have also struggled with cancer yourselves or in loved ones, with other health changes, with death undeserved and too soon. The longer we live, the more we experience such wrenching losses in our families and among our friends.

Our brains are built to seek causes when things happen whether of joy or woe. We like to imagine that our success and good fortune are due to our hard work and clean living (and they do help – *a lot!*) and that we don't deserve having bad things happen to us. But that is, of course, the story of Job in the Bible; he is a completely righteous man to whom horrible things happen – loss of his wealth, his children and his health – and for no good reason whatsoever. Or rather, in the story, because God allows the Satan (the "tempter" is a better translation than what Christians understand by the "devil") to test Job – on a bet!

Rabbi Harold Kushner titled his book about Job and about this problem of suffering "*When Bad Things Happen to Good People*" because it's not a question of *Why* bad things happen – they *will*. So cudgeling our brains to figure out *why* ends up being a mug's game; the *why* is often beyond knowing, as it seems to be in Deedee's case. As Rabbi Kushner makes clear and as ancient wisdom traditions confirm, the only useful question is not "Why?" but rather "Now What?"

Job's wife counsels him to "curse God and die" – or, to put it in more familiar terms, to give up on life and descend into depression. A better counsel is to recognize, as Blake says, that such is the nature of all our lives – joys and sorrows, woven fine, both making our lives what they are: neither entirely fair nor always filled with happiness. As long as we understand this, we can harvest the good that inevitably comes even out of evil: the outpouring of love from family and friends and the support they give us; the gentle hands and brilliant minds of doctors and nurses and aides and all of the good people who do whatever they can to return us to health if possible and – even if that is impossible – to help minimize our suffering; and gratitude for our lives as lived thus far.

We were made for joy and woe,  
And when this we rightly know,  
Through the world we safely go.

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**Worship Services in July & August**

**Our Lay-led Summer Worship Services** will be held in the Upper Parish Hall, July 10 - August 28. They begin at 9:30 a.m. and are generally 45 minutes, followed by a social hour.

**July 10** – Worship with Gordon Hatfield: "Each Year Tells Its Own Story"

**July 17** – Worship with Beth Manchester-Howell: "Rated R Jataka Tales"—From the parables/fables of the Buddha in his past lives.

**July 24** – Worship with Betty Gilson: "Speaking of Peace" (See detailed description below.\*)

**July 31** – Worship with the Growth Committee. Exploring ways to think about congregational growth. (See detailed description below.\*\*)

**August 7** – Worship with the Green Sanctuary Committee

**August 14** – Worship with Tony Winters & McKayla Hoffman

**August 21** – Worship with Bobbe Anderson

**August 28** – Worship with Kathy Keenan

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\* *Speaking of Peace* with Betty Gilson. She will be joined by Dr. Frances Jeffries, who will share information about her three months at Chulalongkorn University in Thailand in the Rotary Peace Scholars Professional Development Certificate program. Its purpose: helping to further develop her skills in conflict resolution and working toward peace, one of Rotary's most important goals. Dr. Jeffries will also tell of her current work for peace.

\*\* Worship with the Growth Committee: When we talk about "growth," we don't just mean numbers. Our denomination, the UUA, looks at growth this way: "Congregational growth is about many things—not just numbers. Four ways that congregations grow are:

- numerical—the number of people attending worship & programs, or number of members
- maturational—the spiritual maturity of each member
- organic—a congregation's ability to maintain its health and engage the world
- incarnational—making real and living our values in the world

What do you think? How do you feel about growth and about these elements of growth? In what ways might we grow in each of these areas? We hope you will join us, ready to talk about the growth of our congregation. Some members of the growth team (which includes Jon Babcock, Janet Dye, McKayla Hoffman, Susan Holton, Bob Messing, Karen Reed-Messing, Rev. Paul Sprecher, Tony Winters, and Korin Zigler) will lead the service.

**FIRST PARISH IS CELEBRATING JULY 4TH WITH ITS ANNUAL SNACK BAR/LEMONADE STAND STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE/BOOK & RUMMAGE SALE.**

Following Bridgewater's Annual 4th of July Parade, make your way down School Street and be sure to stop by **First Parish Church.**



The snack bar will offer burgers, hot dogs and sausages, an assortment of wraps, (vegetarian, too) and a variety of baked goods.

There will be a fresh-squeezed lemonade stand and home-made strawberry shortcake.

Don't forget to visit the Book/Rummage Sale.

Hope to see you there!





# LET'S *Grow* TOGETHER

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SUNDAY

### YOUNG FAMILIES PLAYGROUP



The Young Families Playgroup will not be meeting during the summer, but will begin again in the fall.



Grades Pre-K through 3rd switched up the time for all ages, and read "The Big Orange Splot" by Daniel Pinkwater to both children AND adults in the congregation!

This was one of the books read in the Picture book UU curriculum used this year — a witty story of Mr. Plumbean, who lives on a very neat street where all the houses look the same. One day (no one knows why), a seagull drops a can of orange paint on Mr. Plumbean's roof — and nothing is ever the same for Plumbean or his neighbors. Children are reminded, in a funny and entertaining way, of the joys of individuality and self-expression.



Grades 5-7 presented the famous Unitarian Universalists that they studied with trivia! The congregation was challenged to match the accomplishments with these famous people:

- |                   |                       |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Fannie Farmer     | Maria Mitchell        |
| Beatrix Potter    | Tim Berners-Lee       |
| Clara Barton      | Alexander Graham Bell |
| Susan B. Anthony  | Peter Cooper          |
| Albert Schweitzer | Henry Bergh           |
| Charles Dickens   | Henry David Thoreau   |
| James Pierpont    |                       |

The Youth Group created a video to present a summary of this year's curriculum, Principled Music. The youth studied the lyrics to popular songs, which launched discussions on social justice issues. The youth chose John Lennon's "Imagine" to summarize the year's curriculum. The youth performed the song, and contributed footage for the group video. A quote from the project: "This song asks the listener to transcend everything that keeps us apart: age, culture, religion, race ... and instead opt for a 'brotherhood of man.'"

All children and youth were involved in the service, and they were: ushering, volunteering to assist as lay leader, playing tone chimes, lighting the chalice, assisting with joys and sorrows, and playing music during the offering.

## Green Summer Tips to Help Save the Planet

Nearly everything you do can have some impact on your surrounding environment. Therefore, it is important for you to realize this and just become aware of the footprint you leave behind. Keep in mind that any change, even minor ones, that help the planet can go a long way, even more so if you teach your children these positive habits as well. Here are a few **green summer tips** to help you enjoy the summer fun while keeping Mother Earth clean.

**Skip the Charcoal:** Barbeques and summer are a match made in heaven. Though not all barbeques are created equal, charcoal grills are dirty and contribute to poor air quality. Try a cleaner burning propane gas grill or an electric one to help keep the air cleaner and to lower your carbon footprint.



**Beat the Heat:** Staying cool causes additional pollution through increased demand on the coal fired power plants spread across the country. You can help reduce your electric usage by using a programmable thermostat. In this northern climate, ceiling fans can be a savior. Electric ceiling fans are about 90 percent more energy efficient than central air conditioning.



**Reduce Picnic Trash:** The old style picnic baskets with reusable cups, tableware, cloth napkins and plates are great when it comes to going green. Keeping all of those plastics plates and paper napkins out of the trash helps the pocket book and the planet. Don't forget to use those **reusable water bottles** instead of the **toxic plastic bottled water** as well, it will keep you healthy and save you some money.

These green summer tips are meant to get you started in the right direction towards a sustainable living. So get out there and have fun in the sun while helping keep the planet healthy.

## 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.*

## From Your Community Minister – Rev. Rachel Tedesco

What's Happening in Brockton and Beyond:

**Immigrant Rights and the Brockton Trust Act** – The Brockton Interfaith Community (BIC) is working hard to get a Trust Act passed in the city. There is an urgent need for communities to collaborate with law enforcement in fighting crime, violence and drug abuse. Yet, because the line between and federal immigration enforcement has become blurred through program such as Secure Communities, immigrants and mixed-status families that include immigrants often are afraid to call police and to cooperate for fear of being deported if they reach out.

The Brockton Trust Act would write into law what is the likely the general practice in the city. It states that the Brockton police are not in the business of enforcing federal immigration law. This sends a strong message that local police are not involved in deportation efforts. This would go a long way toward building a relationship of trust between the police and the community.

The proposed Trust Act was introduced into the Brockton City Council by Councilor Moises Rodrigues. BIC members have been talking to their ward and at-large councilors about its importance. The Trust Act is under review and is expected to pass when the council votes in July.

## **The Jobs Not Jails Campaign & the Race for Plymouth County Sheriff** –

BIC is developing a platform around the issue of ending mass incarceration, especially in the Greater Brockton area and in Plymouth County. The platform will be used as the basis for discussion when interviewing candidates for Plymouth County Sheriff: incumbent Joe McDonald and challenger Scott Vecchi. As a non-profit, BIC cannot endorse candidates, but it can make the positions of the candidates known.



**Voter Engagement** – BIC will also focus on increased voter engagement in Brockton for the November election. BIC organizers Isabel Lopez and Angel Cosme recently attended a national PICO training session on this strategy.

IF you would like to get involved in any of these campaigns, you may talk to me anytime.

**EMIT (Ending Mass Incarceration Together)** in Massachusetts. EMIT is pushing for prison reform of solitary confinement through state legislation. See this eye-opening article on the inhumanity of solitary on their website: <https://endmassincarcerationtogether.wordpress.com/> I'll provide more details as I learn more about this campaign.

**People Over Pipelines March** - UU Mass Action is partnering with 350 Mass in organizing the "People Over Pipelines March" planned for Thursday July 14 through Monday July 18. This five day march will begin in Medway by following Spectra Energy's proposed "Q1 loop" (new high pressure 30" gas pipeline extension), continue on to Spectra Energy Pipeline site at West Roxbury and end at the State House for a rally and action on Monday, July 18. Details are on the UU Mass Action website: <http://www.uumassaction.org/people-not-pipelines-march/>



**Brockton  
Interfaith  
Community**

## SHARE THE PLATE

The July and August share the plate offerings will be for MainSpring House lunches. First Parish has been preparing bag lunches for this homeless shelter once a month for many years. Funding for the Social Justice Committee is not in the church budget, so we raise our own funds. Anyone who would like to make a special donation is encouraged to do so. Just make out a check to First Parish Church Social Justice Committee. It will be much appreciated.

Betty Gilson, for the lunch bunch

## MAINSRING HOUSE LUNCHES

Since our usual July lunch making date would be on July 4, we have managed to delay it until the next day. So for the month of July lunches will be made on **Tues., July 5** at 8:45 in the LPH. Also, we were told by the kitchen manager that we only need to make 50 lunches now. So if anyone wants to make homemade cookies or bars some month, you only need to make 50 large or 100 medium.

Aug. lunches will be prepared on **Monday, August 1** at 8:45 in the LPH. Volunteers and donations are always welcome. See Betty Gilson to offer help.

## SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The July meeting of the full Social Justice Committee will be omitted, though the various branches may schedule their own meetings.

Thursday, August 4 at 7pm the regular Social Justice Committee meeting will be held at the church.

## T"UU"RING LEAVES BOOK CLUB

For the summer the Book Club will be catching up on personal reading. However, we will meet once or twice to view movies based on past selections. Check for emails announcing each film, screening location and date. Originally the September selection was to be Cervantes classic *Don Quixote*, but this is being reconsidered. Any motivated reader is welcome to read this amazing tome and we'll arrange a time for discussion of that.

## THANKS, RINGERS!

A heart felt thank you to those who shared their time and ringing with the Tone Chimes for the church year: Deb Baumgarten, Kat Gillespie, Denise Haskins, Eileen Hiney, Ginger Irish, Laurie Lessner, Karen Reed-Messing, Jan Thompson, Shara Yabroudy, and the students of RE... Keep a song in your heart! We'll resume in the fall - after my Sunday farm job ends in October. New members always welcome - no experience necessary, but need to be reliable and commit to one service each month, plus Candlelight and Easter - with one evening rehearsal the week before each service. Have a great summer! --- Lisa Rue xooxox



First Parish Church  
Unitarian Universalist  
is celebrating  
**300 YEARS!!!**

During the 2016-17 church year, there will  
be many events, activities, and celebrations.

Stay tuned for updates  
and more information...

## July 2016 CALENDAR

Monday, July 4

10am Annual 4th of July Snack Bar/Lemonade Stand/Strawberry Shortcake/Rummage & Book Sale

Tuesday, July 5

8:45am MainSpring House lunches prep at FP

**Sunday, July 10**

9:30am Worship with Gordon Hatfield: "Each Year Tells Its Own Story"

**Sunday, July 17**

9:30am Worship with Beth Manchester-Howell: "Rated R Jataka Tales"

Wednesday, July 20

7pm Science and Religion Discussion Group at FP

**Sunday, July 24**

9:30am Worship with Betty Gilson: "Speaking of Peace"

Thursday, July 28

7:30pm Parish Committee Meeting at First Parish

**Sunday, July 31**

9:30am Worship with the Growth Committee. Exploring ways to think about congregational growth.

## August 2016 CALENDAR

Monday August 1

8:45am MainSpring House lunches prep at FP

Thursday, August 4

7pm Social Justice Committee will meet at First Parish

**Sunday, August 7**

9:30am Worship with the Green Sanctuary Committee

**Sunday, August 14**

9:30am Worship with Tony Winters & McKayla Hoffman

Wednesday, August 17

7pm Science and Religion Discussion Group at FP

**Sunday, August 21**

9:30am Worship with Bobbe Anderson

**Sunday, August 28**

9:30am Worship with Kathy Keenan

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