

# BRIDGING



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

March 2017

## From the Minister...

### What does it mean to be "A Community of Risk?"

*To act is to be committed, and to be committed is to be in danger. ~James Baldwin*

*The person who risks nothing, does nothing, has nothing, is nothing. He or she may avoid suffering and sorrow, but he or she simply cannot learn, feel, change, grow, love – live. Only a person who risks is free.*

*- Janet Rand*

I used to love the feeling you get when you ride on a roller coaster, or look down from the top of a very high Ferris wheel, or glance over the edge of a cliff just for that split-second feeling of vertigo – the good kind. I was the one who loved climbing the 30-foot ladder to change light bulbs in the stage lights in a theatre, and climbing onto the roof to put on shingles, and climbing up to the top of the silo on our farm. I suffered a few injuries; once, when I was six or so, my brother and I climbed to the top of the corn crib and dared each other to jump off into the pile of corn cobs below; I probably would have done it, but my brother preempted my decision by pushing me down – which was thrilling, actually, except that I sprained my ankle in the fall. And then there was the time I slid off the roof while putting on the cedar shake shingles on a friend's house. I was working on to make money after my junior year in college – which was terrifying, except that my broken arms did result in my getting a 4-F on my draft physical. Oddly enough, that was one of the thoughts I was having during the fall: "At least it will get me out of the draft!"

Now, somehow, the thrill is gone. I don't even like to climb the ladder to go on the roof of the garage. During a visit to a friend in California over New Years, I found driving along the ocean cliffs on Route 1 more frightening than exciting. I suppose I feel more fragile, more aware of how vulnerable I really am and less sure about being able to bounce back from a fall.

All of which is good common sense – unless it begins to apply to avoiding any kind of risk. It's sensible to get more cautious physically as we get older – we've learned that we're not immortal, which means that some thrills aren't worth seeking. But we can become too risk-averse in other ways, too – afraid to stand up when we're ordered to sit down; afraid to speak out when it's important to object to something that is wrong; afraid to march when there might be any risk of unpleasantness.

Failing to take a risk when we know we ought to can feel like a failure of integrity. I still remember a day during my business career when some blow-hard waxed on about how stupid and sub-human the Palestinians were for engaging in suicide bombings. I didn't take the risk of speaking up and objecting, and I still regret it.

Speaking up, standing up and – even more radically – really *listening* are risky things to do sometimes; and they are also the things that make our lives worth living. Those are the kinds of thrills that are really worth seeking.

Our Connections group, which explores the theme of the month more deeply, just had its first meeting. We will meet again on Tuesday, March 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:30. We have room for a few more members to join us in deep conversation about our lives and beliefs based on the question: "What does it mean to be a Community of Risk?" Please let me know if you are interested in joining us or have any questions: [minister@FirstParishBridgewater.org](mailto:minister@FirstParishBridgewater.org) or 781-774-0086.

In Faith, Rev. Paul

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**Worship Services in March****The theme for the month is "Risk"**

**March 5** - Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher: "Risky Business" -- We often think of adolescents as risk-takers who think they are immortal and criticize them. But maybe the real risks are not thrill-seeking but integrity-seeking.

**March 12** – Worship with Tony Winters: "Thoreau's Dream" - Since the middle of the 19th century, the words and ideas of Henry David Thoreau have rung loudly through the minds of thinkers everywhere. But back then, he never thought anyone would hear him. Here, as we celebrate his 200th birthday, the cast of the First Parish Players' spring play "The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail" present part of his story... and ours.

**March 19** – Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher: "Risky Churches" -- Churches that aren't willing to take any risks stagnate. Risky churches have members who dare to talk deeply to each other and explore their differences, and to act together in proclaiming a message of radical inclusion.

**March 26** – Worship with Rev. Eliza Blanchard: "Our Beating Hearts, Our Animal Hearts" – Rev. Eliza Blanchard will lead an intergenerational service featuring stories and poems about our fellow animals. Rev. Eliza will bring a special guest! We'll give thanks for and blessings to our animal companions in a very special ritual. We encourage you to bring your beloved companions as they are willing and able to enjoy and be enjoyed in a sacred, public space. If not, please bring a photo or other memento. (Leashes and cages are highly encouraged, for the security and comfort of all.)

The next Worship Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, **March 16** at 7:30 p.m. in the church office. Our meetings are open to all. Worship Committee members: Rev. Rachel Tedesco, Chair; Denise Haskins, McKayla Hoffman, Stefan Michaud, Tom St. Thomas, Tony Winters and Rev. Paul Sprecher.

**"NEW UU" CLASS IN UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM**

The second "New UU" Class in Unitarian Universalism will be held on Sunday March 19, 2017 after the service from approximately 12:30 - 3 p.m. The course is geared toward congregants who are thinking of becoming Active Members (with voting rights) of First Parish. The first class, held in February, presented information on the history and principles of Unitarian Universalism and gave us a chance to get to know each other. In this, the second class in the course, we will learn about First Parish and how it functions through its various committees and activities. The class will be led by Reverend Paul Sprecher and various lay-leaders of the church. Lunch will be provided and childcare will be available.

If you are interested in becoming a member of First Parish but are unable to attend the class, you may make an appointment to meet with Reverend Paul to express your interest and talk about the benefits and responsibilities of joining the church [minis-ter@firstparishbridgewater.org](mailto:minis-ter@firstparishbridgewater.org) (781) 774-0086.



# LET'S *Grow* TOGETHER

## RISK

Have you ever risked making mistakes, failed and then figured something out? We learn by trying new things, sometimes fail and then grow in what we know. Unitarian Universalists believe that it is important to continue to search and learn what is true and right. We also believe that your actions should be guided by what you believe. Sometimes that means risking failure and change.

Check out some photos from Feb:



## IMPORTANT DATES

March 5	RE Classes
March 12	RE Classes
March 19	RE Classes
March 26	Intergenerational - Blessing of the Animals
Hello Everyone!	

In February the children and youth worked together with their classes and discussed the topic of **identity**. Each group bonded while discussing different elements that make up each person's identity. The groups shared in some fun games and activities throughout the month, and participated in Valentines creations and also piñata making for our Everybody's Birthday Party!

# HOORAY!

## Everybody's Birthday Party!

**Saturday, March 18th at 7:00 PM**

We are hosting a birthday party just for you! Join us for party games, a piñata, music, and fun bonding as we celebrate life.

The RE Committee will provide the cakes ... bring on the fun!



**First Parish Unitarian Universalist**

1716 - 1717

**300**  
YEARS

2016 - 2017



# SPECIAL EVENT

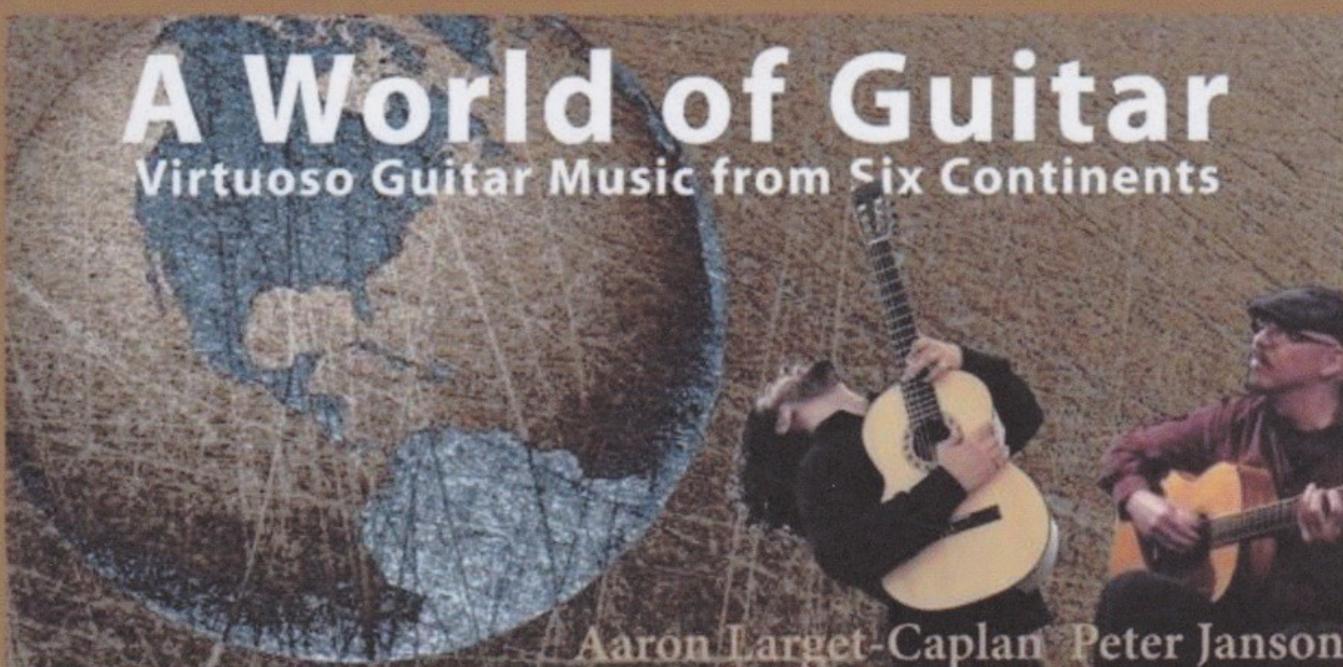


The First Parish UU Peace Committee Presents:



## A World of Guitar

Virtuoso Guitar Music from Six Continents



Aaron Targat-Caplan Peter Janson

**Sunday, March 05 - 3pm**  
Bridgewater First Parish

**Tickets: General Admission - \$15.00**

**Children 12 ↓ and Seniors 55 ↑ - \$10.00**

Location: 50 School Street, Bridgewater, MA 02324



Massachusetts Cultural Council

This program is supported in part by a grant from the Bridgewater Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

## GREEN SANCTUARY TIP

**Nurturing Nature** is a top priority for us at First Parish as we think about our 7th Principal, "We affirm our responsibility to care for the earth and all of its living systems". Last month we wrote about just how beneficial it is to use washable cups, cloth napkins, plates etc. We do make a difference at First Parish so let us take this idea a step further by encouraging our friends and neighbors to reuse. If we Americans filled up our own reusable water bottles we would keep about 50 billion plastic water bottles out of our waste stream every year. I remember when we brought our own tin cups to Girl Scout Camp. Yes, we can change our ways, so speak up, walk the talk and take steps to protect our earth.

## PLASTIC BOTTLE FREE ZONE



TRY A REUSABLE WATER BOTTLE



## WOMENSPIRIT

All women of First Parish.....please join us for WomenSpirit, the women's spirituality group. If you have been to every meeting, we hope to see you there again. If you have never been to a meeting, we hope to see you there for the first time on Monday, March 20 at 6:30pm. Please bring anything you'd like to put on the group altar when we light our chalice, and any food or drink you would like to share (yes, wine is just fine). WomenSpirit meets the third Monday of every month at 6:30 in the Upper Parish Hall (where we have Coffee Hour). Child care is available. Please let me know (Susan Holton, [holtonsusan@gmail.com](mailto:holtonsusan@gmail.com) or 508-821-2034) by the end of church on Sunday if you need child care. If you have any questions, please contact Susan or McKayla Hoffman ([mckayhoffman@gmail.com](mailto:mckayhoffman@gmail.com) or 508-813-0575).



## Off the Common Coffeehouse

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



### Saturday, March 4, 2017 at 7:30pm

Potluck dinner at 6:30pm

*featuring*

### The Boxcar Lilies with Sparrow Blue

## Coming Attractions

March 4 - The Boxcar Lilies with Sparrow Blue

April 1 - Bill Staines

May 6 - The Heather Pierson Acoustic Trio with Emily Mure

Admission: \$15

Enjoy our homemade  
Refreshments

Sign up for open mike!

## PEACE COMMITTEE MESSAGE

A World of Guitar: Virtuoso Guitar Music from Six Continents

The Peace Committee of First Parish Universalist Unitarian Church of Bridgewater is pleased to present a concert by two of America's top solo guitarists Peter Janson and Aaron Larget-Caplan. *A World of Guitar: Virtuoso Guitar Music from Six Continents* features music for solo guitar, and duets, that display the rich variety of human culture as expressed in guitar music. The songs will include styles from Americana to Celtic, to classical and flamenco, and to world-jazz-fusion.

The program, which is in conjunction with the 300th anniversary of First Parish, will be held on Sunday, March 5 at 3pm in the church sanctuary at 50 School St., Bridgewater, MA. Admission is \$15 for adults, \$10 for seniors and children. Child care will be provided for very young children. There will be an intermission with free refreshments and an opportunity to buy CD's.

For more information about the concert and to reserve tickets, call Betty Gilson 774-226-0942.

For more information about the artists and this program, check their website [www.woguitar.com](http://www.woguitar.com).



### SHARE THE PLATE

The Share the plate charity for March is UU Mass Action, our state social action organization. "UU Mass Action believes that our faith calls us to change the world. Grounded in democracy, powered by hope, they organize and mobilize Unitarian Universalists to overcome injustice."

They are involved in many of the issues that are near and dear to many folks here at First Parish. These include Jobs not Jails, Immigration issue and Environmental concerns. You may donate specifically by making out a check to First parish with UU Mass Action in the memo line.

## FULL SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, March 2 at 7pm the full Social Justice Committee will meet at First Parish for brief reports from all the branches and discussion of current plans. New member and visitors welcome.

## MAINSRING HOUSE LUNCHESES

Monday, March 6 at 8:45 am in the LPH 50 lunches will be prepared for MainSpring house Homeless Shelter in Brockton. Volunteers and donations always appreciated.

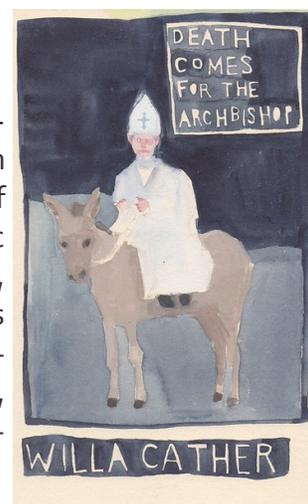
## CARING COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, March 27 at 7pm at First Parish the Caring Committee will meet. Please notify a member if you know of any joy or concern the group should be addressing.

Betty Gilson, Mary Hatfield, Louella Mann, Jan Thompson, Korin Zigler

## T"UU"RNING LEAVES BOOK CLUB

Friday, March 24 at 7pm the T"UU"rning Leaves Book Club will meet location TBD to discuss the March selection. *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, Willa Cather's best known novel is an epic--almost mythic--story of a single human life lived simply in the silence of the southwestern desert. In 1851 Father Jean Marie Latour comes to serve as the Apostolic Vicar to New Mexico. What he finds is a vast territory of red hills and tortuous arroyos, American by law but Mexican and Indian in custom and belief. In the almost forty years that follow, Latour spreads his faith in the only way he knows--gently, all the while contending with an unforgiving landscape, derelict and sometimes openly rebellious priests, and his own loneliness. Out of these events, Cather gives us an indelible vision of life unfolding in a place where time itself seems suspended.



**First Parish Unitarian Universalist**  
1716-1717



**300**  
YEARS

2016-2017

## First Parish Bridgewater and Bridgewater State University

Invite you to a reception for the  
Installation of 300 Years of Historic Materials at the  
Archive Office at Maxwell Library 3rd Floor

**Wednesday, March 15th 2017 at 6PM**



**Maxwell Library**



**BRIDGEWATER**  
STATE UNIVERSITY

Location: BSU Maxwell Library, 3rd Floor 10 Shaw Rd, Bridgewater, MA 02324



Massachusetts Cultural Council

This program is supported in part by a grant from the Bridgewater Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

## 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 50 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.*

# March 2017 CALENDAR

Wednesday, March 1

6:30pm Meditation Group

Thursday, March 2

7pm Full Social Justice Committee Meeting

Saturday, March 4

7:30pm Off the Common Coffee House featuring the Boxcar Lilies with Sparrow Blue

**Sunday, March 5**

9am Choir Rehearsal

10:30am Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher, "Risky Business"

STEWARDSHIP LUNCHEON (following today's service)

3pm Peter Janson & Aaron Larget-Caplan Guitar Concert at First Parish

Monday, March 6

8:45am MainSpring House lunch prep at FP

7:30pm Facilities Committee meeting

Tuesday, March 7

5pm RE Committee Meeting

Saturday, March 11

1pm Lecture: "Single Payer Health Care", UPH

**Sunday, March 12**

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Worship with Tony Winters, "Thoreau's Dream"

Monday, March 13

7:30pm Green Sanctuary Committee Meeting

Wednesday, March 15

6pm First Parish Historic Materials Installation, Maxwell Library, BSU

6:30pm Meditation Group

7pm Science & Religion Discussion Group

Thursday, March 16

7:30pm Worship Committee Meeting

Saturday, March 18

9am-1:30pm Regional UU Workshop, First Parish UU of Canton

7pm Everybody's Birthday

**Sunday, March 19**

9am Choir Rehearsal

10:30am Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher, "Risky Churches"

11:30am Special Congregational Meeting

12:30-3pm New UU Classes at First Parish

Monday, March 20

6:30pm WomenSpirit Meeting at First Parish

Tuesday, March 21

7:30pm Connections Group Meeting

Thursday, March 23

7pm Parish Committee Meeting

Friday, March 24

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

**Sunday, March 26**

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Worship with Rev. Eliza Blanchard, "Blessing of the Animals"

Monday, March 27

7pm Caring Committee Meeting

## First Parish Church Unitarian Universalist

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