

BRIDGING

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

May 2017

From the Minister...

What does it mean to be "A Community of Embodiment?"

*Your body is welcome here, all of it.
Yes, even that part. And that part. And yes, even that part.
The parts you love, the parts you don't.
For in this place we come with all that we are
All that we have been,
And all that we are going to be...*

- Rev. Sean Neil-Barron

The mind-body problem is a wonderful, very old, somewhat obscure question in philosophy. There are those – Descartes, for example – who focus deeply on the mind: "I think, therefore I am." More recently, neuroscientists hold that our "minds" are simply a construct of our brains – that "I" am nothing more than my material substance. Religious language speaks in metaphors about the soul and about the spirit. It is said in Genesis that God breathed life into Adam, and the word for "breath" – *ruach* in Hebrew – is also the word for "spirit." Of course, souls and spirits (and even minds) can't be seen or touched, so to many people they are completely unreal and meaningless to talk about.

What is clear is that we are *embodied* beings, whatever else we may be. Most of us have had discontents with our bodies at one or another point in our lives. What child doesn't sometimes wish for the body of an adult? And what adolescent doesn't wish for something, *anything*, to be different than it is right now – smooth skin instead of acne, more or less sexual differentiation, less emotion, less competition over looks, bigger eyes, smaller noses.... And of course grownups mostly wish they had the wisdom of age and the body of youth.

Alas, we are what we are, subject to all of the indignities of the flesh. Our bodies are born from the bodies of our mothers and we will all die, whether sooner or later. Our bodies are also our passport in the world. Tall politicians are more successful than short ones – apparently we admire tall bodies in our leaders. Black bodies are too often less respected than white bodies. And our bodies change the way we are perceived. Ken Patton, whom I know in part because he served in my home town of Madison, WI, as well as in my home church in Ridgewood, NJ, sought to find out what it was like to be Black by going to Chicago in blackface. After that, he gave a radio talk in the late 1940's in which he casually said that he would like to "resign from the white race and become a colored man." To his surprise this catapulted him into notoriety. A national magazine asked him to explore the extent of racial prejudice in Chicago by attempting to integrate restaurants, hotels, country clubs and real estate. He was repeatedly turned away when he averred himself a Negro or when accompanied by people of color. Bodies matter.

Fully accepting our bodies – for good or ill, in good health or bad, whatever our limitations or benefits – is the road to contentment. In turn, it opens us to the possibilities for affirming the bodies of others that we encounter and affirming them as they really are as well. As the *Tao Te Ching* puts it:

When you are content to be simply yourself
and don't compare or compete,
everybody will respect you
(#8, Stephen Mitchell Version)

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Worship Services in May

The theme for May is "Embodiment".

May 7 – Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher, Rev. Rachel Tedesco, Sonia D'Alarcao, Vernon Domingo, McKayla Hoffman, Yasmeen Thompson, Tony Winters for a special service: "In Your Neighbor's Shoes" - Join us for a teach-in on systemic racism and white privilege in the UUA and in American society. How has it affected our own lives and the lives of others in our various communities? How may we renew the struggle for fairness and full racial equality with a positive and hopeful spirit?

May 14 – Worship with Beth Manchester-Howell: "In Search of Mothering". On the occasion of Mother's Day.

May 21 – Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher: "In Our Bodies" – We are material beings, and our bodies are the "cover" of the "book" within. Some bodies make for easier lives than others.

May 28 – Worship with the Parish Committee on Memorial Day.

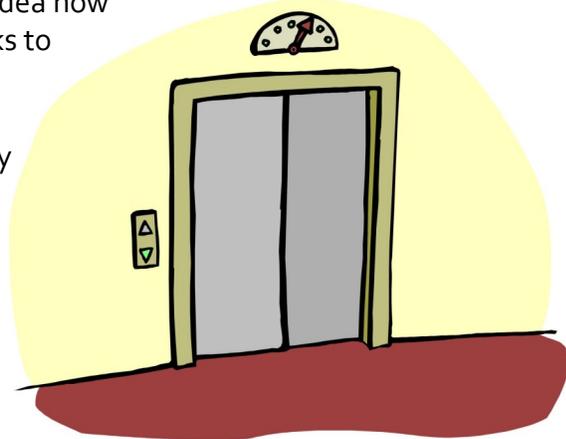
Looking ahead to summer services: We have some openings left for summer lay-led services. If you feel inspired to offer an interesting original service, even if you have never tried this before, please talk to a member of the Worship Committee with your proposal. Our summer season begins on July 9 and ends on August 27.

This month's **Worship Committee meeting** is scheduled for May 18 at 7:30 PM in the church office. Our meetings are open to all. Worship Committee members are Rev. Rachel Tedesco, Chair; Denise Haskins, McKayla Hoffman, Stefan Michaud, Tom St. Thomas, Tony Winters and Rev. Paul Sprecher.

A BIG THANKS FOR YEARS OF ELEVATOR MAINTENANCE

Our elevator was installed and permitted in 1999-2000. Since then, we have been fortunate to have had the elevator serviced and inspected at no cost to us. Chris Kasmarek, who did business as Capital Elevator, never charged First Parish for his services all these years. Chris even paid the fees charged by the state for the required bi-annual elevator inspections (now \$400). Chris is Betty and Bob Gilson's son-in-law. Chris's wife, Thais, was a member of First Parish for years and their children attended First Parish when they were growing up. Chris recently sold Capital Elevator and he and Thais are planning to retire to Corinth, Vermont in the near future. We have contracted with a new company for maintenance and repair of our elevator. This means a new line item in our annual budget from now on to cover the costs of maintenance and repair, which will not be cheap -- elevator mechanics bill at \$235 per hour! We always knew that Chris was making a generous donation to First Parish these many years, but we had no idea how generous! We extend our heartfelt thanks to Chris for his years of service and wish him and Thais a wonderful retirement in Vermont. The Parish Committee recently voted to send an Aubuchon Hardware Gift Card to Chris (his wife's suggestion) as a small token of our appreciation.

The Parish Committee





LET'S *Grow* TOGETHER

SARA WILLIAMS DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

EMBODIMENT

Embody. Do you see the word body in this word? We use our bodies to live and move around in our world. The EM before the word BODY means to put in, or on, or go in or on. When we EM-BODY something we use our bodies to experience or be something.

If I told you that you embodied kindness today, then I would be telling you that you were being very nice.

IMPORTANT DATES

May 7	RE Classes
May 14	RE Classes
May 21	RE Classes
May 28	One Room Schoolhouse

APRIL RECAP

The children and youth had many opportunities to grow as an intergenerational community during the month of April. We worked together to dye eggs for the church's egg tree, and also to create birdfeeders and plant flowers on Earth Day. In RE Classes, the children and youth discussed the theme of Transformation. As we move into May, we focus on the theme of Embodiment and how it relates to our lives, to the church, and to the world around us.





First Parish Unitarian Universalist, Bridgewater, MA
Annual Meeting 12pm, Sunday, June 11, 2017
Upper Parish Hall

REPORT DEADLINE Monday, May 15, 2017 is the last day for all committee chairs to submit their reports for the ANNUAL MEETING to be held on 6/11/17. Send to firstparishbridge-water@hotmail.com

NO EXCEPTIONS!

Thank you in advance for adhering to this deadline.

Metal Recycling - Saturday, May 6



Got Metal?

Bring your scrap metal to the church parking lot this Saturday from 9am to noon to benefit the Bridgewater Food Pantry. All types of metal, including stoves, pipe, file cabinets, bikes, shelving, and grills will be accepted. Please do not include items containing Freon, gas, propane, glass, etc. The metal recycling drive will be held rain or shine and is open to residents and non-residents.

The drive is sponsored by the Green Sanctuary Committee, in partnership with Bridgewater Recycling Inc. In the past seven years, the one-day drive has netted over \$1650 for the food pantry. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Debbie at 774-240-1307 or visit the church website at www.firstparishbridgewater.org.



Off the Common Coffeehouse

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

Saturday, May 6, 2017 at 7:30pm

Potluck dinner at 6:30pm

featuring

The Heather Pierson Acoustic Trio with Emily Mure

Admission: \$15

Sign up for open mike!

Enjoy our homemade Refreshments



AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR THE CONGREGATION

There will be a surprise Fire Drill in the near future. Please review all pertinent directions for exiting the various areas of the church and be prepared to direct those in your charge.

~the Facilities Committee



Balloons Blow--Don't let them go

Balloon release at celebrations, charitable events and memorials has become increasingly popular. Balloons travel thousands of miles, leaving a trail of devastations and pollution on the earth. Letting a balloon go is the same as throwing trash by the roadside and has a devastating impact on the environment and wildlife, esp. marine life. Countless animals mistake the balloons as food, resulting in starvation and death. Other animals become entangled in the attached ribbon or string, unable to fly or swim. Balloon release is illegal in several states and countries. Littering is unlawful and releasing balloons is simply littering.

Make your community aware of the effects of balloon release and if you or your family hear of an event plan to release balloons, **speak up**. Response is usually positive. There are many alternatives that will not pollute the Earth or harm animals.

1. Plant a tree, bulbs, flowers
2. Fly a flag, banner, streamers or a kite
3. Lighting a candle and luminance
4. Blow Bubbles



Make a butterfly garden

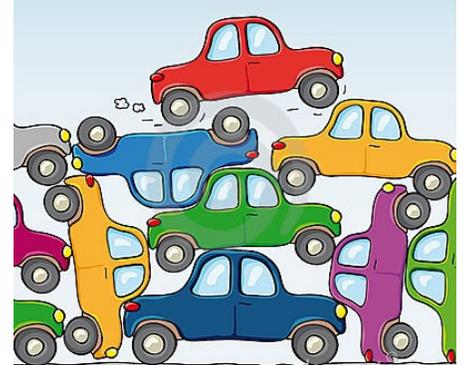
Encourage and Suggest Eco Friendly Alternative to Balloon Release

Dual BSU Graduation Parking Fundraiser

Once again, BSU is having two graduation ceremonies on Saturday, May 13. First Parish will hold its Parking Fundraiser but we need your help! Volunteers are needed to collect money and direct cars to available parking.

Please contact Tom St. Thomas, 508-697-8637 or street8637@yahoo.com or Frank Yeatman, 508-279-3955 or fryleen@verizon.net.

There is a 9am and a 3pm commencement ceremony...
DOUBLE CEREMONY = DOUBLE VOLUNTEERS
Please help out if you can.



SCIENCE AND RELIGION

If you are interested in science but still wonder why Science and Religion are often at odds with each other, you might consider joining the **Science and Religion Discussion Group**. We meet every THIRD Wednesday of the month at First Parish, usually at 7pm in the "Hive".

For May, the book we will be reading is titled "Changes in the Land, Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England." by William Cronon. All are welcome, so please join us on May 17 for a spirited discussion that often drifts into the areas of Philosophy and Ethics

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 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.*

SHARE THE PLATE DONATIONS

The charity for May will be the annual Kids to Camp program promoted by the Green Sanctuary Committee. Half of the plate cash collected during the month of May will go towards camp scholarships for area youth.

BRIDGEWATER FOOD PANTRY

For many years we have been asking for donations to the Bridgewater Food pantry every first Sunday of the month. However, the need seems to be increasing locally. So we are now asking for donations on a regular basis. Any Sunday that you are able, please bring non-perishable foods, paper goods and/or toilet articles. The items may be left in the large colorful box on a bench in the hall between the sanctuary and Parish Hall. A member of the Social Justice Committee will deliver them to the Food pantry at Central Square Congregational Church.

Many thanks for the contributions several of you have been making. They are much appreciated.

MAINSRING HOUSE LUNCHESES

Monday, May 1 at 8:45 am MainSpring House lunches will be made in the LPH. Volunteers and donations always welcome. Contact Betty Gilson for more information.

FULL SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, May 4 at 7pm a meeting of all branches of the Social Justice Committee will be held at the church. Join us to learn about the varied activities of our groups and individuals.

CARING COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, May 22 at 7pm there will be a meeting of the Caring Committee at the church. If you have issues for the committee to address, please contact one of the members.

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

T"UU"RNING LEAVES BOOK CLUB

The May selection for the Book Club will be *The Underground Railroad* by Colson Whitehead. However the date and location for the meeting are TBD. Watch the weekly emails for those details.

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award, the #1 New York Times bestseller from Colson Whitehead, The Underground Railroad is a magnificent tour de force chronicling a young slave's adventures as she makes a desperate bid for freedom in the antebellum South. In Whitehead's ingenious conception, the Underground Railroad is no mere metaphor—engineers and conductors operate a secret network of tracks and tunnels beneath the Southern soil.

IMPROMPTU INVITES

The Membership Committee has noticed that several clever First Parish folks have posted open invitations to movies, lunch, kayak trips, hikes, and various other fun get-togethers on the First Parish Facebook page with good times resulting. We would like to encourage everyone to take advantage of these "Impromptu Invites" and to post spontaneous invitations of their own. Feel like meeting for lunch at a pizza place, seeing a movie or taking a hike with some good friends? Just post your "Impromptu Invite" on the First Parish Facebook page. If you haven't joined the First Parish Facebook page and would like to, contact Jan Thompson of the Membership Committee janicethompson22@comcast.net and she'll add you. This is the closed or "secret" First Parish Facebook page for friends and members of the church, not the public page. Your posts are only seen by members and friends of First Parish who have joined the page.

May 2017 CALENDAR

Monday, May 1

9am MainSpring House lunch prep at FP

7:30pm Facilities Committee meeting

Wednesday, May 3

6:30pm Meditation Group meets in the UPH

Thursday, May 4

7pm Full Social Justice Committee Meeting

Saturday, May 6

9am-noon Annual Free Metal Recycling event at First Parish

7:30pm Off the Common Coffeehouse featuring The Heather Pierson Acoustic Trio with Emily Mure

Sunday, May 7

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am "In Your Neighbor's Shoes", with Rev. Paul Sprecher

Monday, May 8

1pm Green Sanctuary Committee Meeting at Janet Dye's

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

Tuesday, May 9

5pm RE Committee Meeting in the Hive

Thursday, May 11

2pm Membership Committee Meeting at First Parish

7pm Growth Committee meeting at the church

Saturday, May 13

8am BSU Commencement parking fundraiser

Sunday, May 14

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am "In Search of Mothering", with Beth Manchester-Howell

Monday, May 15

6:30pm WomenSpirit at First Parish

11:59pm All First Parish Committee reports are due to be included in the Annual Report

Wednesday, May 17

6:30pm Meditation Group meets in the UPH

7pm Science and Religion Discussion Group at FP

Thursday, May 18

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

7:30pm Worship Committee meeting in the church office

Sunday, May 21

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am "In Our Bodies", with Rev. Paul Sprecher

Monday, May 22

7pm Caring Committee plans on meeting at the church

Thursday, May 25

7pm Parish Committee Meeting at FP

Sunday, May 28

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Worship with the Parish Committee on Memorial Day

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