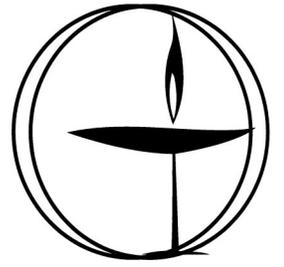


BRIDGING



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

November 2016

From the Minister...

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

We human beings, we like to think in terms of stories. There's something about them that speaks to the innermost part of our being. We like to get caught up in stories... and not just any stories, but big stories. We like to get caught up in stories and adventures bigger than ourselves, to join together for a common goal and a common good.

These stories have heroes, who fight clearly on the side of the good and right and just, and villains (who may be people, but could be organizations, diseases, or bad situations) that are squarely on the side of wrong.

We all want to be part of a story.

- Joe Garecht (with apologies to Frank Yeatman and the Stewardship Committee)

Stories make us human. Perhaps that's what consciousness is really about – making sense of the world around us by telling ourselves stories. I don't mean "making up" *untrue* stories – though we certainly do that some of the time. I mean putting together the flood of sense perceptions that assault us from every direction into a sensible picture of the world around us – a story ground in reality and in our own lives. Look around for a minute; what do you see? I notice my back yard, leaves turning, Tibetan prayer flags that a friend sent during Deedee's illness blowing in the slight wind, the dining room slightly disheveled with things being reorganized so I can live it in as just my house. Inevitably, my loss of Deedee is part of the story I see around me and that I tell myself every day; and I'm sure many of you have had the same experience – loss is visible in what is all around us. So there's making sense of what *is* – what has happened to me, to my house, my ministry, and so on – and there's also a story of what *will be*. Where do I go from here? What kind of person am I, and what will my life be like from this point on?

Sometimes in the face of tragedy and loss, we lapse into a story that is just about the loss, as though our life ended with a loved one's life. But, for most of us, the loss also opens up new possibilities, new opportunities, and new ways of living in a home and in the world. I love Bruce Springsteen's songs because they express a wisdom about the possibility of redemption in the face of loss – last chances that weren't expected until they happened; *stories* about despair and about new possibilities.

This congregation has its stories, too – 300 years of them. We're contemplating whom we are as a people in light of where we come from. I know from personal experience that we are a people whose story includes reaching out in comfort – and with food! – in the face of sorrow. With cards and emails and FaceBook postings that bespeak shared mourning and sorrow – and hope. We hold each other up in good times and bad. That's the kind of congregation we are – and have been for a long time; that's part of our story. This congregation started out with a belief in predestination, the notion that our lives are fated to play out in a predetermined way and that we have no ability to change that – in particular, whether we go to heaven or hell when we die. Our Unitarian forebears properly taught instead that we are more in charge of our own lives than we might think – that we have choices about how we respond to tragedies and triumphs. In our 300th year, we have a particular opportunity to consider not only what story we can tell about who we are as a people, but who we *will become* in the next five and ten and three hundred years.

What stories do we want to tell each other about who we are? Do we want to change our stories? As I said, we wrestle with that in our personal lives – especially in the face of loss – in our congregation and, of course as a nation, as we prepare to go to the polls. Let's write a *good* story!

In Faith,

Rev. Paul

Minister

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Worship Services in November

November 6 - Worship with the Rev. Rachel Tedesco: "Free to Be You and Me; Feminism since the 1960's". On the eve of an historic election, what story do we tell our children about the birth of modern feminism in America? About that time when Betty Friedan published The Feminine Mystique in 1957. And when Marlo Thomas and Friends released the album "Free to Be You and Me" (1972). What has happened since? How free are we today "to be you and me"?

November 13 – Worship with Rev. Richard Fewkes: "Do Unitarian Universalists Have A Story?" Every major religion has a story to tell about its origins and continuing mission and purposes. Does Unitarian Universalism have a story to tell the nations? How do our individual stories fit in with the larger story of who we are and what we are becoming? **This is also our semi-annual "Bring a Friend" Sunday.**

November 20 – Worship with Rev. Richard Fewkes: "The Thanksgiving Story Is Also Our Story".... of what we have to be grateful for in the midst of our struggles and losses and accomplishments. What the Pilgrims accomplished is also ours to do in our own way and with equal fortitude and gratitude.

During the service, we will tell the Pilgrim's Story like a Seder Sharing Story which will conclude with a Reflection by Rev. Richard Fewkes on "The Giving In Thanksgiving."

November 27 – Hymn Sing with the Music Committee

The next **Worship Committee Meeting** is Thursday, November 10 at 7:30 p.m. in the church office. Members and friends are cordially invited to attend. You may share your ideas with us about worship... or simply sit and observe the meeting.

Committee members: Rev. Rachel Tedesco, Chair; Denise Haskins, McKayla Hoffman, Stefan Michaud, Tom St. Thomas, Tony Winters and Rev. Paul Sprecher.

HOLIDAY CAROL-O-GRAMS

Spread holiday cheer through the gift of music.

Members of the choir will sing carols for your loved ones, over the phone or in person! All proceeds go to the church.



Door Carols: Sunday, December 11th 4-7 PM~ \$25

Phone Carols: Friday, December 16th 6:30-9 PM ~\$10

Sign up at church or via email starting at the end of November.

***Thank you for your support of the music program
 at First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church!***



LET'S *Grow* TOGETHER

STORY

Storytelling is the most powerful way we express who we are and what we believe. When we can share our stories with each other we can grow and learn together. Our Unitarian Universalists principles ask us to accept one another and learn together so we can work for a peaceful, fair, and free world. When we listen to each other stories we come closer to understanding our shared truth.

IMPORTANT DATES

November 6	RE Classes
November 13	One Room Schoolhouse
November 20	Intergenerational Service
November 27	RE Classes

Dear Families,

The classes in Elementary and Middle School grades explored the topic of healing during the month of October. Check out some snapshots I've included here!

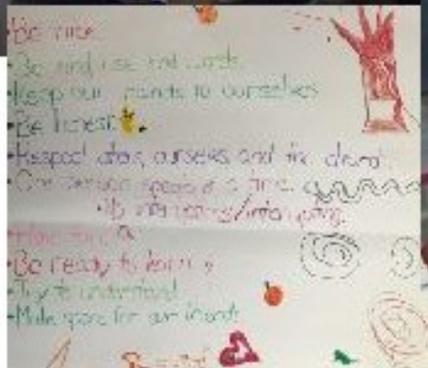
Now, as November arrives, we move to the topic of Story. The RE curriculum will explore a few areas, including:

- Who am I?
- Everyone Has a Story
- Art of Story

The Sr. High Youth are into their Coming of Age curriculum — focusing on their spiritual journey and faith formation.

It is exciting to share this multi-generational growth and bonding!

Sara





FRIDAY and SATURDAY, November 11th and 12th 7 PM at FPUU

Please join us for a grand night presenting:

“Fireflies”

A Musical Written by our own Tony Winter and McKayla Hoffman

Cast: Tony Winters – McKayla Hoffman – Janet Dye – Janice Thompson
Max James – Maren Poesepf – Tom St. Thomas – Joe Risko – Sonia D’ Alarcao
Deb Baumgarten – Eileen Hiney – Karen and Bob Messing

TICKETS ON SALE

CHILDREN (12& UNDER) \$5.00 – STUDENTS \$10.00 – ADULTS \$15.00

Wondering where to go for Thanksgiving?
Tired of the Turkey for two?



Join your church family at the second annual First Parish Family Thanksgiving.

Let me know if you are interested in joining us and what special Thanksgiving dish you would like to bring to share.

It was nice to spend the day last year with many of our special church family. Hope you can come this year.

Any question, call me at (508)378-2906 or (508)333-6048 or email eirish2@aol.com.

Looking forward to seeing you on Thanksgiving.

Susan Irish



Off the Common Coffeehouse

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



Saturday, November 5, 2016 at 7:30pm

Potluck dinner at 6:30pm

featuring

Greg Greenway

Coming Attractions

December 3 - Atwater-Donnelly with The Vox Hunters
January 7 - The Kennedys with Quentin Callewaert
February 4 - Don White
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!

It's getting closer...

The Holly Day Artisan Faire!!!!

Friday, December 9, 6-8pm. Saturday, December 10, 10am-2pm.

NEEDED: Soups, cookies, rummage (**no clothes**), books, greens, vendors (or handmade items to sell at the First Parish table)

VOLUNTEERS: to set up on Friday morn, clean up on Saturday afternoon, help with lunch on Saturday, or serve deserts on Friday eve, sell rummage or books both days. **Lots of help needed.**

BOOKS: Please bring your copy paper boxes in - we still need a bunch more for storing the books!

RUMMAGE: We need LOTS of rummage this year! Please look around your house - closets, garages, basements, play rooms, etc. I challenge **everyone** to find **FIVE** items to donate to the rummage sale!

PLEASE print out the attached flyer (designed by Laurie Lessner - thank you Laurie!) and share it with your family friends, post it at your favorite coffee shop or watering hole, and let's make this faire the best one yet!

VOLUNTEERS - please contact Kat Gillespie @ flopsykitty@gmail.com to sign up, and I'll send out meeting time and date information soon!



Holly Day Faire

HO HO HO...

It's the First Parish Holly Day Faire!

Friday, December 9, 6pm - 8pm

Have a piece of Cheesecake or Decadent Chocolate Dessert while visiting with Santa!

Saturday, December 10, 10am - 2pm

Our Famous Soup Lunch Buffet - try a bottomless cup!

****Both days take a Sweet **Cookie Walk**; buy that special gift from a **Local Artisan** or find hidden **Antique Treasures & Books!******



GREEN SANCTUARY COMMITTEE'S Green Tip of the Month

If every home in the U.S. **replaced** just **one 12 pack of 300-sheet** virgin fiber bathroom tissue **with 100% recycled product** we could save:

1,900,000 trees



690 million gallons of water and



4.4 million cubic feet of landfill space



STONE CHIMES???

Ever thought about ringing with the stone chimes? We need some more help in the rafters, and hope you'll seriously consider joining us. No experience necessary - will train. :) One weeknight rehearsal before each monthly Sunday Prelude - with music review also on Sunday morning . Plus Candlelight Service. Contact lisa at lisa_rue80@yahoo.com.

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

There will be a meeting of the Science and Religion Discussion Group on Wednesday November 16th at 7pm in the Upper Parish Hall. All are welcome.

FIRST PARISH BUSINESS CARDS

Imagine yourself in conversation with your wonderful neighbor. You've talked about First Parish before, mentioning what we do, and why they might enjoy the church, but you've never asked them. There is something that might help you. At both entrances to the Sanctuary, you will find a little basket, full of "First Parish business cards". They feature the First Parish, Bridgewater Butterfly, created a few years ago by Laurie Lessner (thank you, Laurie, it is terrific! The cards have our address and phone number, and say "Join me on Sundays at 10:30 for Worship, Sunday School and Nursery care." At the bottom of the card, our web address appears. The back is blank so that you can write your name, phone number, email and any other information you might want. Take a card fill it out, and keep it in your pocket or purse and have it available we you get in conversation with someone and want to have them learn more about Unitarian Universalism.

FULL SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, November 3 at 7pm the full SJC will meet at the church to share brief reports from all the branches and to make plans for future events. New members and visitors welcome.

MAINSRING HOUSE LUNCHES

Monday, October 31 at 8:45am, 50 lunches will be prepared in the LPH for MainSpring House. If you would like to help in any way, please speak with Betty Gilson. Is anyone interested in providing homemade cookies or bars?

T"UU"RNING LEAVES BOOK CLUB

Friday, November 25 the Book Club will meet at 7pm location TBD to discuss the Bridgewater One Book/ One Community fall selection *Code Talker* by Joseph Bruchac. Bruchac brings to life the stories of some of the unsung heroes of World War II — the young Navajo men who were a crucial part of the American effort in sending and receiving messages that used their native language.

GUEST AT YOUR TABLE

Every November First Parish participates in a Guest at Your Table program in conjunction with the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC). Guest at Your Table (GAYT) is UUSC's annual intergenerational program to raise support for and awareness about the work of the UUSC to advance human rights. This year's program theme is *Defying Hate*, based on the recent release of the Ken Burns documentary about UUSC founders Martha and Waitstill Sharp, *Defying the Nazis: The Sharps' War* (on PBS). The Sharps defied hate by helping Jews and dissidents escape Nazi Germany using brave, creative methods, many of which could have caused them to be imprisoned, tortured, or worse. Join UUSC to protect human rights and promote social justice. For more than 70 years, UUSC has grown through the generosity of thousands of members who share our vision of a world free from oppression and injustice, where all can realize their full human rights. Membership benefits begin at the \$40 level, but we welcome gifts of any amount.

We will be passing out GAYT boxes and *Stories of Hope* at a service this month. Please take the box home, place it on your kitchen or dining room table, and put in offerings at mealtime. You can share the stories then as well. On the first Sunday of January, please return your donations, preferably as a check made out to First Parish with GAYT in the memo line.

GUEST
AT YOUR TABLE

ANNUAL COMING OUT DAY POT LUCK



**NATIONAL
COMING OUT
DAY...**

Even though Coming Out Day is officially in October, First Parish and the Gay Pride Office at BSU will be observing this event on Wednesday, November 9 with a noon luncheon and discussion. The discussion will focus on gender-fluid/non-binary identities. The students will provide information about what the gender binary is and identities that are non-binary. They can facilitate a discussion about the ways the gender binary is manifested in our culture and we can all brainstorm ideas on how as individuals or community members can offer greater inclusion of folks outside the binary. One excellent example of that is from Sam Baumgarten who provides gender-free contra-dancing.

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 LUNCHESES 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 LUNCHESES, 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 LUNCHESES (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 LUNCHESES, WHICH IS ABOUT \$100

PER MONTH FOR 100 LUNCHESES.

PLEASE CONTACT BETTY GILSON (774-226-0942) FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, OR JUST DROP BY THAT MORNING TO HELP.

*THE LUNCHESES 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 LUNCHESES ARE MADE ON THE FINAL MONDAY OF THE PREVIOUS MONTH.

November 2016 CALENDAR

Monday, October 31

8:45am MainSpring House lunches prep at FP

Tuesday, November 1

7pm RE Committee Meeting

Wednesday, November 2

6:30pm Meditation Group at First Parish

Thursday, November 3

7pm Full meeting of the Social Justice Committee

Saturday, November 5

7:30pm Off the Common Coffeehouse featuring Greg Greenway

Sunday, November 6

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Worship with Rev. Rachel Tedesco: "Free to Be You and Me; Feminism since the 1960's".

6pm Adult Game Night at First Parish

Monday, November 7

7:30pm Facilities Committee meeting

Wednesday, November 9

12noon First Parish and BSU's Gay Pride Office will hold luncheon for Nation Coming Out Day

Thursday, November 10

7pm Growth Committee Meeting

7:30pm Worship Committee Meeting

Friday, November 11

7pm "Fireflies", the musical presentation at First Parish Church

Saturday, November 12

9am Clean-up Day at First Parish

7pm "Fireflies", the musical presentation at First Parish Church

Sunday, November 13

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Worship with Rev. Richard Fewkes: "Do Unitarian Universalists Have A Story?"

Monday, November 14

1pm Green Sanctuary Committee Meeting

Wednesday, November 16

6:30pm Meditation Group at FP

7pm Science and Religion Discussion Group at FP

Thursday, November 17

7:30pm Finance Committee Meeting

7:30pm Parish Committee meeting

Sunday, November 20

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Worship with Rev. Richard Fewkes: "The Thanksgiving Story Is Also Our Story"....

Thursday, November 24

2nd Annual First Parish Family Thanksgiving

Friday, November 25

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

Sunday, November 27

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Hymn Sing with the Music Committee

Monday, November 28

7pm Caring Committee Meeting

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