



# BRIDGING

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

December 2017

## From the Minister...

### What Does It Mean to Be a People of *Hope*?

*"Hope" is the thing with feathers -  
That perches in the soul -  
And sings the tune without the words -  
And never stops - at all. ~ Emily Dickinson*

*"Abandon all hope, ye who enter here." - Dante, Inferno*

Hope has something to do with faith – not faith in the sense of a particular set of beliefs, but rather in a reliance on what psychologists sometimes refer to as “basic trust.” When children are raised in a loving home and believe that their parents love them and will care for and protect them, basic trust can develop. Not everyone has the benefit of a secure enough home to develop that basic trust, and that’s where friends and relatives and communities step in to provide other places of safety where trust can grow and hope can be implanted to flourish for a lifetime.

In our ceremonies of child dedication – as in many other traditions – we ask for commitments from godparents, from families, and from our congregations to lovingly support the growth and flourishing of the child, especially in times when parents become overstressed or unable for one reason or another to provide the care that is needed. At a time when neighbors and communities are increasingly fragmented and privatized, congregations are a key place in which care and trust and hope are especially nourished.

Of course, caring extends beyond our congregation as well. We live in a world that is fractured, a world where there are two, three or many opposed factions in politics, among nations, even within families. Living in covenant at First Parish enables us to create a community that can build trust and the capacity to trust among ourselves in ways that empower us to extend trust to others and so keep hope alive.

It’s easy to imagine that we live in more difficult times than any age before us, and there are many signs and symptoms of our times that might lead us to “abandon all hope,” as Dante has it. There are political divisions across which it is becoming increasingly difficult to communicate; climate catastrophes that are increasingly apparent and destructive against which we seem powerless to take any concerted action; and even the threat of nuclear war, a threat some had imagined was banished decades ago. In the religious tradition in which I grew up, these would be seized upon as signs that the End Times are at hand and the Christ will return at the Second Coming very soon.

I do not think that the apocalypse is at hand or that nothing is to be done. I believe that we have the capacity as humans and as members of our faith tradition to build trust where trust has been undermined and thereby, little by little, to work to keep hope alive.

“Hope, that thing with feathers ... that never stops – at all.”

In Faith,  
Rev. Paul

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**Worship Committee News**

The theme for the month of December is **Hope**.

**Worship Services:**

December 3: Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher, "Keep Hope Alive." - In good times and bad, the Advent season reminds us that though darkness grows, light also returns.

December 10: Worship with Rev. Rachel Tedesco, "Hanukkah: A Celebration of Hope" - We may think of Hanukkah as a celebration of miracles, the improbable victory of the Maccabees and the miracle of the oil, enough for just one day, lasting for eight. But it is also a celebration of hope: the hope of triumph in a time of darkness and despair.

December 17: Worship with McKayla Hoffman and Tony Winters, "Hope During Heart's Winter" - Sometimes, the challenges present in the world and in our life make our hearts cold, asleep, in need of rest. How can we remain beacons of hope for others and ourselves when the light of our inner world becomes dim?

December 23: Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher, "Candlelight Service" - Our traditional service of stories and carols -- with a (very) slightly new twist!

**December 24: No Service - Christmas Eve**

December 31: Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher, "Holding on and Letting Go." - The end of the year calls for 'Resolutions' -- which too often fail. Instead, let's face the New Year thinking about what we want to leave behind and what we want to keep doing and believing and hoping for.

**Submit your announcements early!**

We invite all members who have announcements to submit them early to Tony at [tonywin4228@yahoo.com](mailto:tonywin4228@yahoo.com) so that they can be featured on the overhead screen before the start of Sunday services.

**About Worship Associates, Lay Worship Leaders & Ushers.**

We hope all members who are physically-able can fulfill at least one of these tasks twice a year. If you have a particular date you'd like to volunteer, please tell us in advance and you'll likely get your choice. Otherwise, if you are a church member and can do this, but haven't volunteered, expect to be asked to fill a couple of dates.

**Next Worship Committee meeting:** The next regular meeting of the Worship Committee is scheduled for Thursday, December 21st at 7pm in the church office. Members and friends are cordially invited to attend. You may share your ideas with us about worship or simply be present to observe.

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



**PEACE**



# LET'S *Grow* TOGETHER

SARA WILLIAMS DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

## UPCOMING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CALENDAR:

- December 3: RE Classes
- December 10: RE Classes
- December 17: Intergenerational Worship - Winter Solstice
- December 24: NO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
- December 31: One Room Schoolhouse - New Years Resolutions

## CHILDCARE

is available every  
Sunday morning from 10-12

and at every First Parish event!

## MITTEN TREE

During the month of December we will be collecting mittens, gloves, hats, and scarves on the mitten tree in the church sanctuary. The mittens will be donated to the Sunshine Farm Sanctuary in Bridgewater, an outdoor organization that provides services to foster children **ages 5-18**.

More information about Sunshine Farm Sanctuary:

Our mission is to help children heal who have experienced trauma and are now living in the state's foster care system. We at Sunshine Farm have created a new emotional world by healing through compassion and happiness. the experience for children to feel welcomed into a world where people and animals cherish them, protect them, meet their needs, make them feel at home and give them a sense of belonging.



## UUNITED

UUnited Youth Ministry is a youth group of area congregations that meets on the first and third Friday of every month. Youth ages 12-18 are invited to attend UUnited, which is hosted at the Taunton UU church. If you are interested in attending a UUnited get together, please reach out to Sara for more information!



# HOLLY DAY FAIRE

FIRST PARISH CHURCH, BRIDGEWATER

Friday, December 8, 2017 6-8p

Saturday, December 9, 2017 10a-2p

## *Local Artisans & Crafters*

Wrap-up your holiday shopping - buy the perfect gift made locally.

## *Cookie Walk! Select your favorites...*

So many delicious varieties - pecan shortbread, chocolate peppermint bars, ginger, and more. Enjoy a cookie with a cup of hot chocolate. Take a dozen or more home.



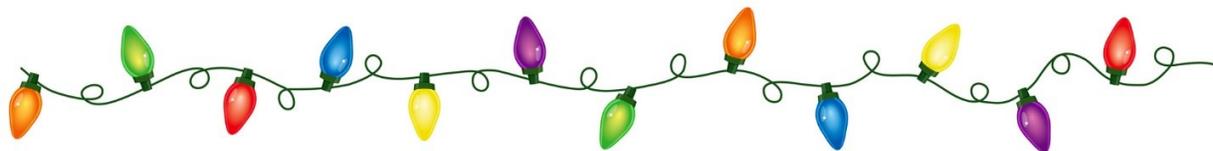
## *Pictures, Stories, & Singing with Santa, Elf, & friends*

## *Browse and Buy gift books for children & adults*

## **Saturday 11a – 2p Soup Buffet!**

Ten or more varieties - creamy corn chowder, chicken with rice, savory lentil, squash bisque. Get a bottomless cup and sample them all. Take out available.

First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church, 50 School St, Bridgewater, MA 02324  
[www.firstparishbridgewater.org/](http://www.firstparishbridgewater.org/) <https://www.facebook.com/FPbwaterUU/>



**WomenSpirit** Please join us Monday, 12-18 at the home of Mary Hatfield (meet at 6:15 at First Parish to car-pool). Bring your thoughts about your spiritual life and your favorite marking/ drawing/ writing implements. Also bring any food or drink you'd like to share. The group will meet from 6:30-8:30pm. If you have any questions, contact McKayla Hoffman (508-813-0575 [mckaylahoffman@gmail.com](mailto:mckaylahoffman@gmail.com)) or Susan Holton (508-821-2034 [holtonsusan@gmail.com](mailto:holtonsusan@gmail.com)) or Yasmeen Thompson ([RAnna14@live.com](mailto:RAnna14@live.com)). We will see you there!



## T"UU"RNING LEAVES BOOK CLUB

Friday, December 1 at 7pm at the church the Book Club will hold its meeting to discuss its **November** selection, *Berlin Game*, by Len Deighton. *Berlin Game* is a 1983 spy novel, the first novel in the first of three trilogies about Bernard Samson, a middle-aged and somewhat jaded intelligence officer working for the British Secret Intelligence Service.

## MAINSRING HOUSE LUNCHESES

Monday, December 4 at 8:30 am MainSpring House lunches will be made in the LPH. Volunteers and donations always welcome. Speak with Betty Gilson for more information.

## SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Thursday, December 7 at 7pm at the church the Social Justice Committee will meet at the church to make plans for future activities including an upcoming film series starting in February, the Black Lives UU service in February and to discuss future share-the-plate selections.

## SHARE THE PLATE FOR DECEMBER

The Share-the-plate charity for December is the National Organization for Rare Diseases (NORD), which has a local office in Quincy. NORD, a 501(c)(3) organization, is a patient advocacy organization dedicated to individuals with rare diseases and the organizations that serve them. NORD, along with its more than 260 patient organization members, is committed to the identification, treatment, and cure of rare disorders through programs of education, advocacy, research, and patient services. The Crompton family at First Parish has had supported by this organization over the years. Perhaps others in the congregation have used this valuable resource.



## Off the Common Coffeehouse

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



**Saturday, December 2, 2017 at 7:30pm**

Potluck dinner at 6:30pm

*featuring*

**Greg Greenway**

### Coming Attractions

December 2 – Greg Greenway  
January 6 – The Kennedys with Quentin Callewaert  
February 3 – Bernice Lewis  
March 3 – David Roth  
April 7 – The Monica Rizzio Band  
May 5 – Chris & Meredith Thompson

*Admission: \$15*

*Enjoy our homemade  
Refreshments*

*Sign up for open mike!*

## **OUR RESTROOM RENOVATION IS COMPLETE!!**

From Eileen Hiney and Denise Haskins

Hopefully, most of you have seen (and used) the completely new, wheelchair-accessible restroom in the lower level. The beautiful new restroom, combined with the new floor, newly-painted walls and clean-up of the storage area just outside the restroom, are wonderful improvements to the lower level of our building. (The re-decorated RE space looks great, too.)

A Request for Proposals for the restroom renovation was issued in April 2016. We received two bids for the project. At a Congregational Meeting on December 14, 2016, the congregation approved entering into a contract with McKinley Construction and authorized spending up to \$20,000 for construction of a handicapped-accessible restroom.

Prior to the Congregational Meeting, the Finance Committee determined that we had approximately \$15,000 available in existing accounts to cover most of the costs. The final project cost was \$19,048, so only \$4,000 of the funds raised during our 2017 Capital Campaign were needed to cover the balance.

The demolition of the old restroom began in late June and the contractor's work was finished in late August. We were pleased with the work the contractor did and relieved that he did not run into major unanticipated problems with the construction. (Always a concern with an old building.)

### **Here is a report on the project costs:**

Authorized at 12/14/2016 Congregational Meeting:	<b>\$20,000</b>
Original Contract amount (McKinley Construction):	17,550
Cost for extra plumbing work required by town inspector:	<u>250</u>
<b>Contractor Total Cost</b>	<b>17,800.00</b>

Although it was not part of the contract, we decided the floor in the storage area outside the restroom needed to be replaced. The contractor's cost (\$650) for this was offset by reducing other project costs. Quent Jarvis donated his time to patch and paint the walls in the storage area.

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Other Expenses (not included in original contract):	
Flooring materials	\$932
Light fixtures and exhaust fan	171
Miscellaneous (Paint; insulation; curtains; sign)	<u>145</u>
<b>Total Additional Expenses</b>	<b>1248</b>
<b>FINAL PROJECT COST:</b>	<b>\$19,048</b>

## ***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 10th 4-7 PM~ \$25**

**Phone Carols: Friday, December 15th 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!***



## A holiday green tip from the Green Sanctuary Committee



### Simple Gifts

Do yourself and the Earth a favor this holiday season by simplifying your gift giving and decorating. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Shop locally—perhaps at First Parish's Holly Day Artisan Faire!!
- Consider the life of your purchase.
- Donate unwanted gifts.
- Resist the temptation to buy more.
- Give your time, not stuff.
- Donate to the charity of your recipient's choice.
- Use reusable shopping bags.
- Use wrapping paper that is responsibly made and includes high recycled content.
- Reuse wrapping paper, gift bags, ribbons and bows.
- Use recycled card art and sprigs of live evergreen in place of tags and bows on your gifts.
- Reuse newspapers or magazines to make your own wrap.
- For someone you no longer want to exchange gifts with, send a gift exemption voucher.
- Decorate your home with items from nature.
- Use real dishes and cloth napkins when entertaining.
- Spend time with loved ones doing things that bring you joy—don't get caught up in the stress of commercialization.

Many of these tips came from <http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/publiced/holidays/LessWaste.pdf>.

### 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.

# DECEMBER 2017 CALENDAR

Friday, December 1

7pm T"UU"rning Leaves Book Club will meet at First Parish

Saturday, December 2

9am Leaf Clean-up

7:30pm Off the Common Coffeehouse with Greg Greenway

**Sunday, December 3**

9am Choir Practice

10:30am Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher, "Keep Hope Alive."

Monday, December 4

8:30am MainSpring House lunches prep at FP

7:30pm Facilities Committee meeting

Thursday, December 7

7pm Social Justice Committee Meeting at First Parish

Friday, December 8

6pm Holly Day Artisan Faire at First Parish

Saturday, December 9

10am Holly Day Artisan Faire at First Parish

**Sunday, December 10**

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Worship with Rev. Rachel Tedesco, "Hanukkah: A Celebration of Hope"

4-7pm Door Carol-o-Grams

Monday, December 11

1pm Green Sanctuary Committee meeting at Janet Dye's home

Tuesday, December 12

Hanukkah begins

Friday, December 15

6:30-9pm Phone Carol-o-Grams

Saturday, December 16

11am Memorial Service for Walter Hatfield

**Sunday, December 17**

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Worship with McKayla Hoffman and Tony Winters, "Hope During Heart's Winter"

Monday, December 18

6:30pm WomenSpirit Meeting

Wednesday, December 20

7pm Science and Religion Discussion Group at FP

Thursday, December 21

7pm Worship Committee meeting

**Saturday, December 23**

7pm Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher, "Candlelight Service"

**Sunday, December 24**

NO SERVICE

Monday, December 25

Merry Christmas!

Tuesday, December 26

Kwanzaa begins

Thursday, December 28

7pm Parish Committee Meeting at FP

**Sunday, December 31**

9am Choir Practice

10:30am Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher, "Holding on and Letting Go." -



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