



BRIDGING

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

February 2018

From the Minister...

What Does It Mean to Be a People of *Perseverance*?

*Though you've broken your vows a thousand times,
Come, yet again, come.* - Rumi

Perseverance – keeping on when the going gets rough – has partners and embodiments, grit and resilience among them. It's about how you keep on keeping on despite hazards and roadblocks and disappointments and sorrow. It helps us to keep on track by pointing to a purpose that keeps calling us no matter what.

Angela Duckworth was teaching low income children when she had the insight that grit, more than IQ or any other factor, predicted success for her students. There is of course the novel *True Grit* by Charles Portis in which a stubborn teenage girl defies all the odds to force the powers that be to track down her father's murderer. It became the story for two movies of that name in 1969 and 2010, the first with that veritable embodiment of grit, John Wayne. It's hard to put a finger on how it comes about that some people "have" grit. Not everyone is John Wayne (thank heavens!).

Resilience is sometimes a better term for what we need to do every day. It's how each of us survives with our integrity intact in the face of setbacks. We are inspired by stories of resilience and endurance like Nelson Mandela's *Long Road to Freedom* and Alfred Lansing's *Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage*. Maya Angelou's poem "Still I Rise" captures this perfectly:

"You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise..."

Perseverance is not really about a continuous process of holding the pedal to the metal, working all-out day and night or burning out from overwork. It's about cultivating loving friends and family to give encouragement through hard times; about slowing down to refresh the spirit; and about holding on to clarity of purpose whatever the curves life throws at us. It's about clarity of purpose. Aly Juma tells a story of Three Stonecutters:

A man came across three stonecutters and asked them what they were doing. The first replied, "I am making a living." The second kept on hammering while he said, "I am doing the best job of stonecutting in the entire county." The third looked up with a visionary gleam in his eye and said, "I am building a cathedral."
When you feel like quitting, think about why you started.

In Faith,

Rev. Paul

Minister

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Worship Committee News

The theme for the month of February is **Perseverance**.

Worship Services

February 4 - Rev. Paul & Social Justice Committee: "Still on the Journey" - Unitarian Universalists have struggled for racial justice for generations -- and still we persevere. We consider that long history and how we continue the journey in *The Promise & the Practice of Our Faith* as we support Black Lives of UU. We will be sharing the plate in February with BLUU.

February 11 - Beth Manchester-Howell: "Founding Fathers" - We are living in a time with a favorite founding father (without a father). But in this time of love for Alexander Hamilton, what can we learn from the faiths of his two Unitarian enemies, John and Adams and Thomas Jefferson?

February 18 - Rev. Paul: "Strength for the Journey" - Any hard task -- including living our lives -- calls for focus and perseverance, but it also requires slowing down to catch our breath and restore our strength.

February 25 - Rev. Richard Trudeau: "Jesus & the Debate About Peace." - Guest preacher Rev. Richard will explore the Jewish notion of peace from justice, as Jesus might have understood it.

About Our Guest Preacher: Richard Trudeau is a longtime Universalist, and author of *Universalism 101*. He was for 17 years the minister of the UU Church of Weymouth, Mass. and for 35 years a teacher of math and the history of astronomy at Stonehill College in Easton, Mass. His latest book is *Bible Stories for Skeptics*. He is married to Susan O'Connor, who is the interim general manager of BNN, Boston's local-access cable-TV channel.

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, February 15 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, Tony Winters and Rev. Paul Sprecher.

"NEW UU" CLASSES IN UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM

We have been fortunate to have seen many new faces at First Parish since the start of the church year this fall. We are happy that you chose First Parish and the Unitarian Universalist faith as part of your spiritual journey. If you are interested in becoming an Active Member of our church (with voting rights), we will be offering classes in Unitarian Universalism on Sunday February 18 and Sunday March 4 after the regular church service. Led by Reverend Paul, these classes offer instruction in the history of Unitarian Universalism and its principles. The first class on 2/18 will be centered around the text "The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide" which will be provided to each participant before the classes meet. The second class on 3/4 will offer insight into how First Parish functions and how you can participate more fully in the work of the church. If you are interested in becoming a member of First Parish or would just like more information about Unitarian Universalism and our church, please contact Jan Thompson of the Membership Committee JaniceThompson22@comcast.net (508) 697-2492



SARA WILLIAMS DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

CHILDCARE

is available every Sunday morning from 10-12 and at every First Parish event!

UPCOMING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CALENDAR:

- February 4: One Room Schoolhouse -- Valentine Creations
- February 11: RE Classes
- February 18: One Room Schoolhouse
- February 25: RE Classes

FEBRUARY -- PERSEVERANCE

In February, the children and youth will experience many different activities within their own classes as well as in a mixed age group. We will have two One Room Schoolhouses this month -- one opportunity will have all children and youth creating Valentines to be given with this month's Mainspring House lunches.

A wonderful thought from the Soul Matters Sharing Circle Curriculum I want to share with you:

A turtle stands for Perseverance. The turtle is steady and slow, carrying its house on its back. The theme for our congregation is "Perseverance." "What does it mean to be a people of Perseverance?" It means to be like a turtle. Take things slow, and eventually get there.

EVERYBODY'S BIRTHDAY PARTY

March 17, 2018
Time: Afternoon, TBD

Mark your calendars! The RE Committee will be hosting a special St. Patrick's Day edition of Everybody's Birthday Party this year at First Parish!

At Everybody's Birthday Party, all ages gather together to play games, decorate (and eat) birthday cakes, and get to know one another!



Stewardship Team Announces Date for Stewardship Sunday

The Stewardship Team has set Sunday, March 4 as Stewardship Sunday. We celebrate Stewardship as an attitude that is reflected in all of our congregational efforts. It is the spirit that shapes what we do. The Team is committed to the growing, nurturing, promoting and building of the gifts (Time, Talent, and Treasure) we share.

Our job is to plan and establish a year-round, comprehensive stewardship program and to develop and implement the annual budget drive campaign that reflects our congregation's mission, vision, and priorities. Over the coming weeks, the Team will roll out this year's plan for a successful budget drive.

The Team members are: Bob Messing, Jenny Donahue, Janet Dye, Laurie Lessner, Linda Dunphy, and Frank Yeatman. You will hear more from us soon.

You are cordially invited to a FREE viewing of the film **13th**, a 2016 documentary which explores the intersection of race and mass incarceration in the United States.

The title refers to the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which freed the slaves.



Tuesday, February 27, 2018 at 7pm

**First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church,
50 School St., Bridgewater**

Sponsored by
the Social Justice Committee of the First Parish UU Church
and the Bridgewater Citizens for Civility and Respect.
Second in the Black Lives Matter film series.

BLACK LIVES MATTER FILM SERIES

Please join us for the February film, *12 Years a Slave*, on Tuesday, February 23 at 7pm at First Parish. Here is the complete schedule showing the corrected dates.

Black Lives Matter Film Series
at First Parish UU Church, Bridgewater
[50 School Street, Bridgewater, MA 02324](#)
First Parish Social Justice Committee
and co-sponsored with Bridgewater Citizens for Civility and Respect
The fourth Tuesday of each month at 7pm

January 23 *12 Years a Slave*

In the antebellum United States, Solomon Northup, a free black man from upstate New York, is abducted and sold into slavery.

February 27 *13th*

13th is a 2016 American documentary by director [Ava DuVernay](#). The film explores the "intersection of race, justice and mass incarceration in the United States;" it is titled after the [Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution](#), which freed the slaves and prohibited slavery (unless as punishment for a crime).

March 27 *42*

In 1947, [Jackie Robinson](#) becomes the first African-American to play in Major League Baseball in the modern era when he was signed by the Brooklyn Dodgers and faces considerable racism in the process.

April 24 *Detroit*

Fact-based drama set during the 1967 Detroit riots in which a group of rogue police officers respond to a complaint with retribution rather than justice on their minds.

May 22 *I Am not Your Negro*

Using the unfinished final manuscript of African-American writer and intellectual James Baldwin, this documentary from director Raoul Peck delves into the legacy of Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr., and Medgar Evers, and explores their impact on what it means to be black in America.

FEBRUARY SHARE THE PLATE

The share the plate charity for February will be in support of Black Lives UU, a special program of the UUA. Our morning service on February 4 will focus on *The Promise and the Practice of our Faith for Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism*. As part of this program we are asked to support the effort of the UUA in fulfilling its matching program. If you would like to make a specific donation by check, please make the checkout to First Parish and put BLUU in the memo line.

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, February 1 at 7pm the Social Justice Committee will meet at the church to discuss plans and upcoming programs. New members and ideas are welcome.

MAINSRING HOUSE LUNCHES

Monday, February 5 at 8:30 am in the LPH 100 lunches will be prepared for MainSpring House. Donations and volunteers always welcome. Speak with Betty Gilson to offer help.

T"UU"RNING LEAVES BOOK CLUB

Friday, February 23 at 7pm, location TBD the T"UU"rning Leaves Book club will meet to discuss their February selection.

From Your SHARED MINISTRY COMMITTEE

2017-2018

Our First Parish Shared Ministry Committee (SMC) has three members: Scott Gillespie, Beth Manchester-Howell and Pamela Hayes-Bohanan. The Parish Committee appoints members of the committee jointly with Rev. Paul.

The Shared Ministry Committee's task is to take the pulse of the church: How does FPUU feel? How is it doing? Any Unitarian Universalist church congregation is diverse in belief, opinion and approach and First Parish Bridgewater is no exception. This dynamic is our congregational strength, but it can also be a source of challenge.

The SMC, as we call it, focuses on the personal and spiritual part of our congregation's work. We are an advisory body and the communication channel for the congregation and the minister. We invite members to contact the SMC at church, through email, or phone with your concerns. Our names and contact info is in the directory. You may request that we hold your name in confidence or not.

The Shared Ministry Committee does not solve problems by direct action, but rather through the facilitation of communication and connection. It does not focus on practical concerns that inevitably preoccupy the leadership (Parish Committee at FPUU) of this congregation. We have a supportive role generating communications regarding the minister. The minister is not our sole focus as we represent the whole congregation including the members, staff, and the minister.

Our work is assessing the congregational life including any place where we might not be living up to our shared covenant. Is there a challenge or conflict that is not getting resolved well?

So how do we hope to accomplish our work?

First, by listening to you, the congregation and staff. As many know, there are different kinds of listening. The first kind we employ is reflective. Once again, perhaps you don't want to have your name connected with something, you just want to get it off your chest or get another's take on what your concern might be.

The second kind of listening is communicative. Perhaps you want your concern communicated to someone else, with or without your name being connected. This relates to the confidential aspect of the work of a Shared Ministry Committee. But remember, the more confidential something is, the harder it is to address.

The third kind of listening is connective. You not only want to talk with a member of the Shared Ministry Committee, you are wondering who in the congregation you need to connect with about your concern.

Whether reflective, communicative or connective, we attempt to keep a positive tenor to relationships in the church.

Another way that the Shared Ministry Committee will work is by observation. That might be observation of process, of personal interactions, of effectiveness, conflicts, or accomplishments. Since observation is something that is done personally by the members of the SMC, it will be shared among them and the minister or when meeting with the Parish Committee or others for them to consider.

Shared Ministry Committee observations are for reflection and consideration, they are not judgments. As SMC members, our commitment is to objective observation and communication, suspending our bias in favor of understanding someone's point of view or their sense of an experience.

Another main way that the SMC will work is by meeting with the minister from time to time. We are, or hope to be, one more way that the minister finds out what the congregation thinks and feels, a conduit for both support and concerns from the congregation. We have a sense of what is happening and the feel of the congregation. But we do need and seek your feedback, praise or critique, from as many members as possible if we are to be truly effective.

Along with leadership, we will keep church members reminded of the limitations of a half-time ministry. A reasonable balance between practices and resources is needed for harmony within the congregation. While all concerns can be considered, some requests may not be practical in a half-time situation.

Above all, our goal as your Shared Ministry Committee is to help and work with this congregation to live out its covenant: To live together in peace, Speak the truth in love, And help one another.

Kidde Recalls Fire ExtinguishersPlease Read

Kidde Fire Extinguishers has recalled these extinguishers with Plastic Handles as they may become clogged, require excessive force to discharge and can fail during a fire emergency. The nozzle can detach with force to pose a hazard and injury. One death reported.

There **are 134 models** manufactured from January 1, 1973 to August 15 2017. Please go on-line to www.kidde.com and click "Product Safety Recall". Information provided to locate the date of manufacture and Models. Simply submit information and it will indicate if this is a recall model. Kidde will replace all affected extinguishers.



Join us for a Peace Vesper Service

Music & Meditation on the theme
feeling at home in the world, finding peace in your heart.

First Parish Church UU
50 School Street, Bridgewater
Monday, February 12, 2018 at 7pm
All are welcome



Off the Common Coffeehouse

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

Saturday, March 3, 2018 at 7:30pm

Potluck dinner at 6:30pm

featuring

David Roth



Coming Attractions

April 7 – The Monica Rizzio Band
May 5 – Chris & Meredith Thompson

Admission: \$15

*Enjoy our homemade
Refreshments*

Sign up for open mike!

Happy Valentine's Day

Annual Lasagna Dinner at First Parish
Saturday FEB 10th 2017 6:00PM
Dinner \$10.00/person \$5/Kids (12↓)

A night of fun, trivia and surprises!

Reserve your Sweetheart's Roses, Wine
at Coffee Hour in advance.

Surprise delivery to your table with dinner!

Tickets and gifts can be ordered by phone or email
at 813-789-8059 - dcw@wilsonsevent.com

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.

FEBRUARY 2018 CALENDAR

Thursday, February 1

7pm Social Justice Committee Meeting

Saturday, February 3

7:30pm Off the Common Coffeehouse featuring David Roth

Sunday, February 4

10:30am Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher and the SJC, *Still on the Journey*

Monday, February 5

8:30am MainSpring House lunches prepared and delivered

7:30pm Facilities Committee Meeting

Saturday, February 10

6pm Annual Valentine's Lasagna Dinner at First Parish

Sunday, February 11

9am Choir

10:30am Worship with Beth Manchester-Howell, *Founding Fathers*

Monday, February 12

1pm Green Sanctuary Committee will meet

7pm Peace Vesper Service at First Parish

Thursday, February 15

7pm Worship Committee meeting in the church office

Sunday, February 18

9am Choir

10:30am Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher, *Strength for the Journey*

12noon New UU Classes at First Parish

Monday, February 19

6:30pm WomenSpirit

Wednesday, February 21

7pm Science and Religion Discussion Group at FP

Thursday, February 22

7pm Parish Committee meeting

Friday, February 23

7pm T"UU"rning Leaves Book Club

Sunday, February 25

9am Choir

10:30am Worship with Rev. Richard Trudeau, *Jesus & the Debate About Peace*

Tuesday, February 27

6pm Black Lives Matter Movie Series: "13th" at First Parish

Wednesday, February 28

6:30pm Bystander Training at the Bridgewater Senior Center

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