



BRIDGING

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

October 2018

From the Minister...

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

Our listening creates a sanctuary for the homeless parts within another person.

- Rachel Naomi Remen

The idea that there need to be places to which people can flee for sanctuary is an ancient one. According to the Jewish Bible, Moses commanded the Israelites to create "Cities of Refuge" so that a person who accidentally killed another person could be protected from the righteous anger of relatives who were obligated to avenge the death by killing the one who caused the death. The killer would be protected so that they could be put on trial rather than being summarily executed. If it was determined that the death was in fact accidental, then the killer could remain in the city of refuge – the sanctuary city – and be protected from vengeance. The *Oresteia* by Aeschylus tells of how Orestes fled for sanctuary from the Furies to Delphi after killing his mother to avenge her murder of his father. In effect, both stories describe how legal procedures like trials came to be used to replace the chaos that ensues when families are obliged to take vengeance into their own hands.

Churches and temples have been places of sanctuary for thousands of years, and violations of that sanctity have historically evoked moral condemnation – as when Thomas à Becket was assassinated in Canterbury Cathedral by henchmen of Henry II and subsequently canonized as a martyr.

Today some cities have identified themselves as sanctuary cities by refusing to turn undocumented immigrants who are arrested for other reasons over to ICE. The pragmatic reason for such a choice is clear: If people without documentation are afraid they will be deported for reporting a crime, it is much safer for them to remain silent – which then makes the work of the police in responding to crimes much more difficult.

Many of our Unitarian Universalist congregations have become part of the Sanctuary movement and are either offering to shelter undocumented immigrants who are at risk of deportation or are supporting other congregations that are doing so. At least three of our congregations were actively serving as sanctuaries last winter.

These are rather dramatic ways in which our October theme of *Sanctuary* can be applied. More prosaically, our congregation provides shelter for all of us from the hard times and stresses in our lives. A UU Children's story, "The Umbrella Sanctuary," uses the image of an umbrella to represent the many ways others offer us sanctuary from the storms of life as well as the many ways we can pass on that shelter to others. One of the spiritual Exercises for our Connections group for October suggests carrying an umbrella around during the month to remind ourselves of "all the times someone has noticed you in need and how your gratitude for that calls you to keep an eye out for those often subtle (and not-so-subtle) signs that someone else needs the gift of human shelter."

This would be a good month for all of us to look for ways we can provide sanctuary for others.

In Faith,
Rev. Paul

Minister

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BLACK LIVES MATTER FILM SERIES

Tuesday, October 23 at 7pm in the UPH at First Parish Church the next film in the BLM film series will be presented by the First Parish Social Justice Committee and the Bridgewater Citizens for Civility and Respect. This month's film will be "Hidden Figures", the story of a group of female African-American mathematicians who served a vital role in NASA in the early days of the space program. Their difficulties were exacerbated by the intersectionality of race and gender.

**WORSHIP COMMITTEE NEWS
OCTOBER 2018**



**THIS MONTH'S WORSHIP THEME IS
SANCTUARY**

"A minute afterwards he appeared upon the upper platform, still bearing the gipsy [sic] in his arms, still running wildly along, still shouting 'Sanctuary!' and the crowd still applauding. At last he made a third appearance on the summit of the tower of the great bell. From thence he seemed to show exultingly to the whole city the fair creature he had saved; and his thundering voice, that voice which was heard so seldom, and which he never heard at all, thrice repeated with frantic vehemence, even in the very clouds, 'Sanctuary! Sanctuary! Sanctuary! Sanctuary! Sanctuary!'"

An excerpt from Victor Hugo's "Hunchback of Notre Dame"

Worship Services

October 7 – Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher: "Will You Harbor Me?"

Throughout history, people in danger have needed to seek sanctuary. Sometimes great courage is needed to offer sanctuary.

October 14 – Worship with Peter Bowden: "Friends, Social Media, and America's Loneliness Epidemic" -

Today people are more "connected" than ever thanks to smartphones, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media. Yet American's are statistically some of the loneliest people on Earth! In this talk Peter Bowden, an expert on community building and digital life, will share how we can bridge our online and offline communities, better welcome people into the heart of our congregation, and bring our values more fully into the world.

About Peter Bowden: Peter Bowden works nationally with Unitarian Universalist congregations, nonprofits, and other organizations seeking to amplify their impact through intentional community building. When not working with community building and digital life, he works on multiple nationally syndicated PBS Kids television shows and web series. He lives in Cambridge, MA with his wife, the Rev. Amy Freedman, and their daughter.

The NEW Digital Path to Membership with Peter Bowden

October 14th from 12PM - 2PM, Lower Parish Hall

Social media is fundamentally changing how people connect, learn, and make important life decisions. This includes how digitally oriented people are trying to connect with, research, and join congregations. On Sunday, October 14th, following the service, First Parish leaders are invited to attend a seminar and strategy session with Peter Bowden on changing technology, social media, and the new digital path to membership in our congregations. This program will begin at 12PM and will last for two hours.

October 21 – Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher: "Seeking Safety" - We all need "safe places" where we can rest secure and come to know who we really are.

October 28 - Worship with Yasmeen Thompson: "A Samhain Blessing" - Yasmeen will guide the congregation in a ceremony for Samhain, the Pagan New Year, the third and final harvest of the year, and a time to honor old traditions in our modern world. We will also be honoring those loved ones in our lives who have passed on. All are invited to bring images of loved ones who have passed on to place on the altar.



About Worship Associates, Lay Worship Leaders & Ushers.

Worship Committee invites all to participate in worship services as worship associates, lay worship leaders, and 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, October 18th at 7pm in the church office. Members and friends are cordially invited to attend. We encourage you to share your feedback and ideas with us about worship, or simply be present to observe.

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



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

*Broad Wings
and
Deep Roots*

RE CALENDAR

October 7: One Room Schoolhouse

October 14: RE Classes for preschool and elementary; Youth may attend the service

October 21: RE Classes

October 28: RE Classes

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

The church year has begun and children and youth have had opportunities to attend church services and start their religious education classes. The youth group has chosen their curriculum. See below!



YOUTH GROUP

An update on the curriculum for the youth! The group discussed curricula during the first RE session and decided on a UU curriculum based around the Harry Potter series. This curriculum seeks to help participants learn that change is possible through multiple avenues, and can happen whether the problem is local or worldwide. Students will have the opportunity to make a difference in their community and the world in a meaningful way through hands-on projects that will also teach them social responsibility.

SARA WILLIAMS, DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION DRE.BRIDGEWATER@GMAIL.COM



A Social Justice Committee Announcement:

ADVOCACY & ACTIVISM FAIR – Thursday, October 25, 3 to 5pm in the Atrium of the Dana Mohler Faria Science & Science Center, 24 Park Street at Bridgewater State Univ. Free and open to the public. Come to meet representatives from dozens of groups and organization with concrete actions to take and campaigns to join. Also come for the free food! Co-sponsored by the Social Justice Committee and The Martin Richard Institute for Social Justice at BSU.



ADVOCACY & ACTIVISM FAIR

- ✓ be an active citizen
- ✓ use your voice
- ✓ influence policy
- ✓ take a stand
- ✓ mobilize for change
- ✓ address root causes
- ✓ resist

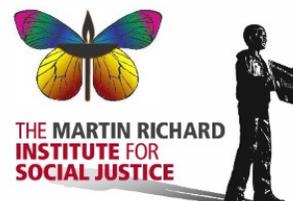
THURS 10/25

3-5pm

Free food

Dozens of groups & orgs w/ concrete actions to take! All welcome.

Atrium, Dana Mohler Faria Science & Math Center
Bridgewater State University
24 Park Avenue, 02325



Co-sponsored by MRISJ @ BSU & First Parish Unitarian Universalist Bridgewater

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.



The Annual First Parish Holly Day Faire

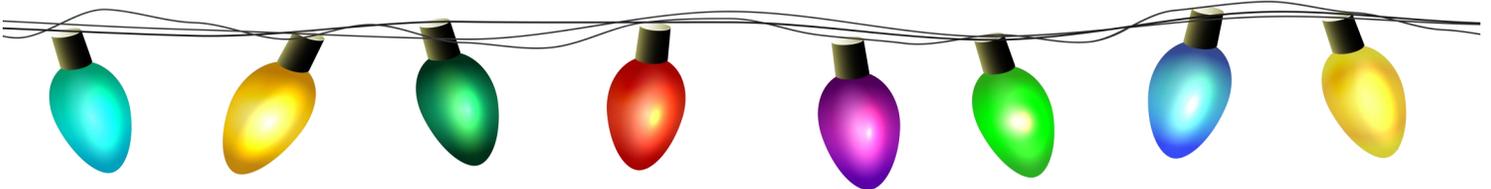
will be held on Friday, December 7th, 6-8pm
and Saturday, December 8th, 10am-2pm

As always, we will be looking for volunteers to make this event a success, so please put these dates on your calendar.

If you know an artisan or crafter, please let them know we are seeking vendors. The price for a table is \$30 (covers both days). For more information or to reserve a spot, anyone interested should send an email to Eileen Hiney (fryleen@verizon.net) or leave a voice mail at the church number 508-697-2525

Thank you!

The Events Committee – Eileen Hiney, Laurie Lessner, David Wilson, Tony Winters



Song and Story Hour, 3rd Friday of the Month

Come join us at 7pm on Friday, October 19th, at the First Parish Church, 50 School Street, Bridgewater. Remember how much you used to like being read to? Be part of that magic again. Bring along a favorite passage you've enjoyed or maybe something that you've written yourself. Those with a musical bent are welcomed as well. You do know that music soothes the savage beast, so your talents would be greatly appreciated, I'm sure. Enjoy a "screen-free" time with others who are enamored of the written word. Who knows ~ maybe you'll be enlightened or even amazed! Maybe you'll be doing the enlightening and amazing! If you'd like to bring a snack to share that would be lovely, however, it's totally optional. Hoping to see you there! If you have any questions or comments, email me @ bobbe@goddesspcs.com or call me at 857-366-0553.



Off the Common Coffeehouse

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



Saturday, October 6 at 7:30pm

Potluck dinner at 6:30pm

Featuring Cosy Sheridan with Charlie Koch

November 3 - Cliff Eberhardt with Louise Mosrie opening
December 1 - Greg Greenway
January 5 - Cold Chocolate
February 2 - The Boxcar Lilies with Ric Allendorf opening
March 2 - Emily Mure and The Whispering Tree (split bill)
April 6 - Caroline Cotter and Emilia Dahlin (split bill)
May 4 - Grace Morrison

*Admission: \$15
Enjoy our homemade
Refreshments
Sign up for open mike!*

Circle Dinner Sign-Up

So, our new church year is in full swing and fall is in the air. Time for sharing memories and renewing relationships with our First Parish friends. A great way to strengthen friendships, old and new, is to participate in one of our First Parish Circle Dinners. Circle Dinners are small gatherings held at the homes of First Parish friends and members and are a great way for us to get to know each other outside of the Sunday service church setting.

[Our fall round of Circle Dinners will be held Fridays and Saturdays November 2 & 3 and November 9 & 10.](#)

We are looking for warm-hearted hosts to open their homes to guests for a fun evening of food and conversation. Some of the gatherings will be for adults and others will be open to children as well as parents. Hosts will provide appetizers and beverages and guests will bring the rest of the food including entrees, side dishes, salads, breads and desserts. If you would like to host or attend a Circle Dinner, please sign up on the sheets in the Upper Parish Hall, or contact Susan Irish eirish2@aol.com (508) 378-2906.

SHARE THE PLATE CHARITY

The Share the plate charity for October will be the Brockton Interfaith Community (BIC).

First Parish is a supporting member of BIC. For over 25 years, Brockton Interfaith Community has been working to change the balance of power in low and moderate income communities. By making sure all people have a seat at the table of power in their local community, state capital, and even Washington, D.C., BIC builds the civic capacity necessary for a healthy, functioning, democratic system. BIC trains its diverse members to improve their community by building good relationships, identifying common concerns, finding solutions, and taking action for the public good.

If you would like to make a specific donation for BIC, write a check to First Parish and put BIC in the memo line.

MAINSRING HOUSE LUNCHES

Monday, October 1 at 8:30am in the LPH 100 lunches will be prepared for MainSpring House Homeless Shelter in Brockton. Volunteers and donations are always welcome. Contact Betty Gilson to offer help. gillyflower@verizon.net

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, October 4 at 7pm at the church there will be a meeting of the Social Justice Committee to discuss many upcoming issues and projects. New members and suggestions are always welcome. For more information speak with Rev. Rachel Tedesco or Betty Gilson.

BLACK LIVES MATTER FILM SERIES

Tuesday, October 23 at 7pm in the UPH at First Parish Church the next film in the BLM film series will be presented by the First Parish Social Justice Committee and the Bridgewater Citizens for Civility and Respect. This month's film will be "Hidden Figures", the story of a group of female African-American mathematicians who served a vital role in NASA in the early days of the space program. Their difficulties were exacerbated by the intersectionality of race and gender.

T"UU"RNING LEAVES BOOK CLUB

Friday, October 26 at 7pm the T"UU"rning Leaves Book Club will meet at the church to discuss the October selection *Witch of Blackbird Pond* by Elizabeth George Speare. This is a classic work of young adult historical fiction. The novel tells the story of Katherine "Kit" Tyler, a young orphan who, in 1687, travels from the tropical island of Barbados to the stark Puritan colony of Connecticut. With her flashy clothes and aristocratic roots, Kit doesn't fit in with the piety or plainness of her new extended family. Feeling out of place, Kit befriends another outsider, the Quaker Hannah Tupper. When a fever strikes the children of Wethersfield, the residents accuse Hannah of bringing the plague upon the town. Kit too faces accusations of witchcraft, simply for befriendng the woman no one else would touch.

Young adults in the congregation are invited to participate and share their ideas. Contact Betty Gilson for more information.

OCTOBER 2018 CALENDAR

Monday, October 1

8:30am MainSpring House lunches prep at FP

7:30pm Facilities Committee meeting

Thursday, October 4

7pm Social Justice Committee Meeting at First Parish

Saturday, October 6

7:30pm Off the Common Coffeehouse featuring Cosy Sheridan with Charlie Koch

Sunday, October 7

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher: "Will You Harbor Me?"

Monday, October 8

1pm Green Sanctuary Committee will meet at Janet Dye's

Sunday, October 14

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Worship with Peter Bowden: "Friends, Social Media, and America's Loneliness Epidemic"

12-2pm The NEW Digital Path to Membership with Peter Bowden, Lower Parish Hall

Monday, October 15

5pm Events Committee meeting

Wednesday, October 17

7pm Science and Religion Discussion Group at FP

Thursday, October 18

7pm Worship Committee meeting at the church

Friday, October 19

7pm Song & Story Hour at First Parish Church

Sunday, October 21

9am Choir Practice

10:30am Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher: "Seeking Safety"

Tuesday, October 23

7pm Black Lives Matter film series, "Hidden Figures", will be shown at First Parish

Thursday, October 25

3pm Advocacy & Activism Fair, atrium, DMF Center, BSU

7pm Parish Committee meeting

Friday, October 26

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

Sunday, October 28

9am Choir Practice

10:30am Worship with Yasmeen Thompson: "A Samhain Blessing"

**First Parish Church
Unitarian Universalist**

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