



BRIDGING

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

October 2017

From the Minister...

What Does It Mean to Be a People of Courage?

May you always be courageous

Stand upright and be strong

May you stay forever young - Bob Dylan

And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary."

- Steve Jobs, Stanford commencement speech, June 2005

"Courage" comes from the French word *coeur*, meaning 'heart.' It means a willingness to follow your heart, to listen to the call that comes from within and to be willing to follow that call. We often think of courage as something that is exercised only on extraordinary occasions – soldiers in battle, or the African American students who integrated one of the Little Rock High Schools under armed guard fifty years ago this fall, or the stranger who jumps into a pool to save a drowning youngster. Actually, we ordinary folk in ordinary circumstances face calls to be courageous in small ways all the time. It takes courage to strike up a conversation with a stranger rather than ignoring them. It takes courage to speak up when someone is being insulting or racist or male chauvinist. It takes courage to choose a new direction for your life when you're feeling perfectly comfortable with the way things are but feel the call to something more. Maybe (as Dylan suggests) children are naturally courageous, and maybe we forgot how to keep up our courage as we settle into adulthood.

Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement, provides an opportunity to reflect on the courage it takes to seek and to grant forgiveness. To apologize is often difficult because apologizing means acknowledging that we have done something wrong. It may come to seem an admission that we are ourselves somehow wrong or bad. Maybe that's why apologies by politicians and other public figures so often amount to justifications rather than real apologies: "I'm sorry if you were offended; I was just trying to be honest about my feelings;" or "Of course I was wrong, but it was really in the service of the larger good." Just saying your sorry with no reservations is hard; it takes courage to own the fact that we're human and fall short of our best intentions – over and over and over again. Forgiveness can take courage, too. It means giving up the righteous sense of having been wronged and acknowledging that mending the fabric of human relationships requires giving up grudges and feelings of superiority.

Speaking out takes courage. It took courage for Bobbe Anderson to decide to stand on a corner in North Easton the day after Charlottesville. As so often happens the courage shown by one person is contagious – so Bobbe ended up standing with twenty-five others. Where might our congregation show more courage in speaking out?

As we wind up the celebration of our 300th year as a congregation on the weekend of October 21-22, we pay tribute to the souls who ventured forth from our Mother Church – First Church in West Bridgewater – and founded our First Parish three centuries ago. We're going to commemorate the occasion by holding a joint worship service on Sunday October 22nd. We're going to meet at 10 am at First Church at 29 Howard St. West Bridgewater for a shortened service and then caravan down to First Parish and have a rededication of our congregation on it's 300th birthday. New ventures take courage, and our forebears' courage has stood us in good stead.

In Faith,
Rev. Paul

Minister

Rev. Paul Sprecher
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Worship Committee News

The theme for the month of October is Courage.

Worship Services:

October 1 – Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher: “We Forgive” – Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, is the day in the Jewish tradition for seeking forgiveness from God for wrongdoing. But God will only forgive us if we have first asked forgiveness from any person we may have offended. How do we find the courage to seek and to offer forgiveness?

October 8 – Worship with Kimberly French: “The Least of These My Brothers”

What does our theology teach us about how we treat people who have committed crimes that seem unforgiveable? Just a few miles from our church and homes is the Old Colony Correctional Complex, a collection of medium-security institutions that incarcerate hundreds of inmates and mental-health patients. Kimberly French will share her own spiritual journey as a lay-ministry visitor to an inmate there.

A contributing editor and online columnist of the *UU World*, Kimberly French is a journalist who has been a longtime active member of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Middleborough. Her collections of essays “Offenders Among Us,” about sex offenders and clergy misconduct, appeared in the Winter 2014 *UU World*. This year she co-led a five-week environmental justice course called “Our Web of Life” to lay the groundwork for locally based social-justice work. She serves as chair of Middleborough’s Community Preservation Committee.

October 15 – Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher: “The Courage to Change” – When anyone asks us to change, our first reaction is usually to resist and defend ourselves, even if we agree that we need to change. So how do we work up the courage to actually become the better person we wish we were?

October 22 – Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher & Rev. Carol Ashton, Minister at The First Church of West Bridgewater: “Thanks, Mom!” – The service starts at 10am at the First Church of West Bridgewater, 29 Howard St. This service marks the end of the celebration of our 300th Birthday as a congregation with a joint service with our “Mother” Church. We will start the morning with a brief service at First Church and then proceed to First Parish to rededicate our congregation for the next 300 years!

October 29 – Worship with McKayla Hoffman & Tony Winters for Samhain: “I Walk the Unfrequented Road.” Join us for a morning of quiet reflection and diving into the deep, inner oceans of the Self. We’ll contemplate who each of us are uniquely in the web of life and what we have to offer to this web in the midst of our chaotic world.

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, October 19** at 7pm in the church office. (Note the change of time.) 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.



LET'S *Grow* TOGETHER

SARA WILLIAMS DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2017-2018 CLASSES AND CURRICULUM

NEW CHILDCARE HOURS

10 am - 12 pm
Lower Parish Hall

Preschool through First Grade

Lower Parish Hall

Teachers: Sonia D'Alarcao and Tom St. Thomas

The youngest group welcomes children from 2.9 years through approximately first grade. Newcomers can speak with Sara about class placement! The curriculum that we are exploring in this group is called "Celebrating Me and My World." In this class, the children are encouraged to:

- develop a positive self image
- feel safe, accepted, and at home in church
- become familiar with the terms "Unitarian Universalist," "Unitarian Universalism," and "chalice"
- feel a growing inter-connection with nature

Older Elementary: Grades 2-6

Upper Parish Hall

Teacher: Jenny Donahue

The older elementary group is a mixed class that embraces children of various ages and abilities. Each member of the group helps one another and the curriculum is differentiated for various abilities. Each month, this group focuses on activities, lessons, and experiences that directly link to the church's worship theme. The curriculum is part of the "Soul Matters Sharing Circle," Each session is designed to engage children in three fundamental spiritual experiences; what Soul Matters call "the three S's."

- Silence = meditation, listening, mindfulness.
- Service = leadership, helping others
- Sunshine = connection with nature and our bodies through outdoor activities or movement

Jr. and Sr. High Youth Group

The Hive

Teachers: Dan Lovetere and Dave Garcea

Youth in Junior and Senior High School join together in The Hive (the modular unit next to the church) every Sunday morning. This year the group will be participating in a curriculum called "The Fifth Dimension," and it's based around watching and discussing episodes of Rod Serling's "The Twilight Zone."

This curriculum seeks to help participants:

- Consider social issues and the ways in which our faith can help us understand our values.
- Understand ways in which the right of conscience calls us to do what's right, even if there are possible negative consequences.



The UUSC Coffee Project

In the world, coffee is one of the most heavily traded commodities. Coffee links our communities to farming communities in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Our participation in this project helps small farmers earn a fair price for their products and have access to affordable credit. We buy and serve Equal Exchange (EE) Fairly Traded shade grown coffee during our social hour every Sunday. The Social Justice committee is also selling this gourmet organically grown coffee for your home or office use. If you would like to purchase some beans or other fairly trade EE items such as cocoa, chocolate chips, extreme chocolate bars, nuts, tea or olive oil please contact Janet Dye (dyedyeo7@gmail.com) More information can be found in the Parish Hall or you can go or check out <http://equalexchange.coop>. Please support this effort and buy yourself some beans, tea or cocoa and a cup of justice!!!

SHARE THE PLATE CHARITY

The Share the Plate Charity for October 1 will be the final week for School on Wheels MA. The following four Sundays October and the month of November the charity will be Brockton Interfaith Community of which First Parish is a member. 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, DC, 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.

MAINSRING HOUSE LUNCHES

Monday, October 2 at 8:30 am in the UPH lunches will be made for Mainspring House Homeless Shelter in Brockton. Volunteers and donations always welcome. Speak with Betty Gilson for more information.

ANNUAL COMING OUT DAY EVENT

Tuesday, October 3 from 11am - noon the GLBTA Pride Center at BSU and First Parish will join together for a *Getting to Know UU* brunch in the UPH. We will be discussing what our organizations do and how we can be better allies to each other. To sign up and/or help with the brunch contact Betty Gilson at gillyflower@verizon.net.



SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, October 5 at 7pm the Social Justice Committee will meet at the church. We will be making plans for fall activities including working on upcoming petition drives and the social action issues. All welcome.

T"UU"RING LEAVES BOOK CLUB

Friday, October 27 at 7pm the T"UU"ring Leaves Book Club will meet at the church to discuss *Confederates in The Attic* by Tony Horowitz. In light of today's concerns about Confederate statues and other Civil War artifacts, this is a timely book. For all who remain intrigued by the legacy of the Civil War -- reenactors, battlefield visitors, Confederate descendants and other Southerners, history fans, students of current racial conflicts, and more -- this ten-state adventure is part travelogue, part social commentary and always good-humored.

MRISF JUSTICE TALK

The Martin Richard Institute for Social Justice will hold a present a talk on Immigration Justice in October. Watch weekly church email for details.

CONCERT FOR THE MARTIN RICHARD INSTITUTE for SOCIAL JUSTICE

On October 1 at 3pm at the BSU Rondileau Campus Center Auditorium, the Plymouth Philharmonic will present a concert *Inspiration, Hope and Joy* to benefit the Martin Richard Institute for Social Justice.

"Strike a Pose!"

First Parish is working with Lifetouch Church Directories and Portraits to produce a photo directory of First Parish congregants this fall. Professional portraits will be taken of First Parish members, friends and attendees (regular or occasional, we want everyone included!) on Thursday October 26 and Friday October 27 from 2 – 9pm and on Saturday October 28 from 9:30 am-5 pm.

You can sign up any one of 3 ways:

Online: Go to this link <https://booknow-lifetouch.appointment-plus.com/y6h74d54/> and follow the instructions to schedule your sitting.

At church: The Membership Committee will staff a table in the vestibule before Sunday services and in the Upper Parish Hall after services to assist you in scheduling your sitting.

Phone or e-mail: You may contact Jan Thompson by phone (508) 697-2492 or e-mail JaniceThompson22@comcast.net to schedule your sitting



All families will receive a free 8 x 10 professional portrait and a free church photo directory for participating. You will also have the option of purchasing additional portraits, frames, and personalized greeting cards in time for the holidays. Please plan on your portrait sitting (prep, photo shoot, and choosing of your portrait) to take approximately 1 hour. Your portrait can be casual or dressy and can include any personal items you'd like to bring. Are you musical? Bring your instrument! A gardener? Bring veggies or flowers from your garden, or even a rake or hoe! We can even accommodate pets, just give us advanced notice when you sign up. The photo directory will help us connect names with faces and enhance our connections with each other. Our photo directory won't be complete without you, so please remember to save one of the dates for your photo shoot!

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

The Science and Religion Discussion Group meets every third Wednesday of the month. For the month of October 2017 this falls on Wednesday October 18th. We meet at First Parish in the "Hive" at 7pm. Discussion is always lively and not always based on a text. For instance, this month we are discussing "On the Nature of Things" by Lucretius. If you are interested in philosophy, science, religion, and ethics please attend this fun gathering.



President Frederick W. Clark Jr. Esq., '83
and

The Martin Richard Institute for Social Justice
at Bridgewater State University

cordially invite you to a family-friendly benefit concert
by the Plymouth Philharmonic Orchestra

INSPIRATION, HOPE AND JOY

Sunday, October 1, 2017
3 o'clock

Bridgewater State University
Rondileau Campus Center Auditorium

In celebration of the richness and joy of community, *Inspiration, Hope and Joy*, will support the activities of the Martin Richard Institute for Social Justice, which largely assists at-risk and marginalized children across the region and the globe. Featured performers include the university's wind ensemble and cast members of the Family Performing Arts Center, along with State Attorney General Maura Healey, who will narrate from *Aaron Copeland's Lincoln Portrait*.

Tickets available at BSUitix.com

Call 508.531.1321 for
more information or email
boxoffice@bridgew.edu

THE MARTIN RICHARD
INSTITUTE FOR
SOCIAL JUSTICE



WomenSpirit will focus on the spiritual journey of our lives – and the bumps and the bridges across waters that help keep us safe and propel us on our way. For all of us, there are places on that journey that aren't what we expected, which caused great anguish – and others that gave us joy beyond belief. Please join us Monday, 10.16 at the home of Mary Hatfield (meet at 6:15 at First Parish to carpool). 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) or Susan Holton (508-821-2034 holtonsusan@gmail.com) or Yasmeen Thompson (RAnna14@live.com). We will see you there!



RAISE UP MASSACHUSETTS FALL CAMPAIGN

The church's Social Justice Committee is working to collect voters' signatures for Raise Up Massachusetts' Fall Campaign. The campaign goal is to get two initiatives on the ballot for next year's election. These are to raise the state's minimum wage to \$15 an hour and to guarantee all workers paid family and medical leave. We've already collected a total of 27 signatures on petition forms from the congregation. The next step is to go to public places in our area to ask for people's support. Anyone who would like to participate in the campaign are invited to contact Rev. Rachel.

We want your old sneakers Old sneakers worn? Smelly? Time for new sneakers? Reuse-A-Shoe Program !!!

Nike has a program to recycle your old sneakers into new athletic surfaces. Not just Nikes brand but all sneakers. The athletic shoes are divided into 3 sections:

- The **rubber outsole** to make playground surface, running track;
- the **foam midsole** to make tennis and basketball courts;
- the **fabric upper** for pads under indoor volley ball and basketball courts.

Collections of athletic shoes to be recycled will be collected in a plastic bin and will be taken to the Nike store for recycling.

The shoes must be **CLEAN** (give a quick wash) and **no metal cleats**.

Location of bin to be determined.

www.nikereuseashoe.com for more information

Please see Pat Hart for more information... thank you



Off the Common Coffeehouse

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



Saturday, October 7, 2017 at 7:30pm

Potluck dinner at 6:30pm

featuring

Susie Burke & David Surette

Coming Attractions

- October 7 – Susie Burke & David Surette
- November 4 – Cormac McCarthy
- 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!

Recycle Reduce and Reuse

Your Green Sanctuary Committee wants your CDs, CD cases and DVDs. Bring them to church to the labeled box in the Upper Parish Hall. The CD Recycling Center of America has a few thoughts on their project:

RECYCLE CDs and DVDs are EVERYWHERE. As new technology emerges, CDs and DVDs are becoming unwanted and obsolete daily. But you can put them to good use. Proper collection, sorting, handling and recycling allows your unwanted discs to become new items molded from the recycled plastic. Home goods, automotive parts, building materials and many more everyday items can be made from the #7, high quality plastic that discs are made from. **The key is to keep all the discs together, and separate from lower grade plastics that contaminate.**

Thank you for acting green.

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 those we have missed over the summer. 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 3 & 4 and 10 & 11**. We are looking for warmhearted 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 Jan Thompson JaniceThompson22@comcast.net (508) 697-2492 or any member of the Membership Committee: Karen Messing, Bob Messing, Susan Irish, or Louella Mann.

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.*

OCTOBER 2017 CALENDAR

Sunday, October 1

9am Choir Rehearsal

10:30am Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher, "We Believe".

3pm "Inspiration, Hope and Joy" Concert to benefit the Martin Richard Institute for Social Justice, BSU

6pm Adult Game Night at FP

Monday, October 2

8:30am MainSpring House lunches prepped and delivered, LPH & kitchen

7:30pm Facilities Committee meeting

Tuesday, October 2

11am *Getting to Know You* brunch at First Parish in coordination with National Coming Out Day

Thursday, October 5

7pm Social Justice Committee Meeting at First Parish

Saturday, October 7

7:30pm Off the Common Coffeehouse with Susie Burke & David Surette

Sunday, October 8

9am Choir Practice

10:30am Worship with Kimberly French, "The Least of These By Brothers"

Monday, October 9

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

Sunday, October 15

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Worship with Rev. Paul, "The Courage to Change".

11:30am Committee Fair following today's service

Monday, October 16

6:30pm WomenSpirit Gathering

Wednesday, October 18

7pm Science & Religion Discussion Group meets in the Hive

Thursday, October 19

7pm Worship Committee Meeting in the church office

Saturday, October 21

Male Bonding Band Concert

Sunday, October 22

10am Worship with Rev. Paul & Rev. Carol Ashton at **First Church of W. Bridgewater**, "Thanks, Mom!"

11am Worship continues at **First Parish Church of Bridgewater**

12pm Celebratory Luncheon—marking the end of a year-long 300th Birthday celebration for First Parish.

Thursday, October 26

2pm Lifetouch Portrait session at the church

Friday, October 27

2pm Lifetouch Portrait session at the church

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

Saturday, October 28

9:30am Lifetouch Portrait session at FP

Sunday, October 29

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Worship with McKayla Hoffman & Tony Winters for Samhain, "I Walk the Unfrequented Road".

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