



The Meeting House News

IN THIS ISSUE

REVERIES

Clarity Is Freedom

*I had tea yesterday with a great theologian, and he asked me,
“What is your experience of God’s will?”*

I liked that question – for the distillation of thought hones thought in others. Clarity, I know, is freedom.

What is my experience of God’s will?

Everyone is a traveler.

Most all need lodging, food, and clothes.

I let enter my mouth what will enrich me.

I wear what will make my eye content.

I sleep where I will wake with the strength to deeply love

All my mind can hold.

What is God’s will for a wing? Every bird knows that.

— St. Teresa of Avila

(Love Poems From God: Twelve Sacred Voices from the East and West by Daniel Ladinsky)

Clarity can mean freedom. As First Parish members and friends move through candidating week, April 28–May 5, clarity will be all-important for a joyous and exciting conclusion to the week.

Unitarian Universalists have the privilege and the responsibility of congregational polity.

That means that only signed members of a UU congregation have the authority to call a minister. No one decides for you or assigns a minister to you. The power to decide as a congregation who ministers to and with you is a historic authority passed on to signed First Parish members through generations of Unitarians and Universalists. To responsibly assert your authority you will need to know intuitively and logically that Howard Dana is the right person to minister with First Parish. That clarity in your call will come from meeting with Howard, asking him questions, and following through on all we have learned and shared during this interim.



During candidating week, I will be discreetly invisible and simultaneously available if you need me. Focus your attention and intention on Howard. Attend events. Know the schedule. Speak your mind. Ask your questions. Let him know who you are, and what is important to you. Become familiar with Howard’s strengths and imperfections. Appreciate all of him, and what you and Howard can be together. Clearly know that Howard Dana is the right minister for First Parish. Discover “... *the strength to deeply love all your minds and hearts can hold.*” There lies your path to new freedom.

Much metta,

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There are three inserts at the end of this newsletter:

- ◆ WPA Tea
- ◆ Concord Area Humanists Speaker
- ◆ Wright Tavern Center Programs

First Parish in Concord

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
Gathered in 1636

First Parish in Concord is a welcoming Unitarian Universalist congregation that seeks ways to deepen spiritually, build community, and make a positive difference in the world.

WORSHIP SERVICES AT FIRST PARISH

Sunday, May 5

Second Candidating Weekend

Rev. Howard N. Dana

9:00 & 11:00 – Gospel Choir & First Parish Choir

Sunday, May 12

All a Mother's Child — Elaine Beth Peresluha

Mothers. We all have one. The relationships are precious, complicated and one of the most influential in our lives. Today, we will dedicate our babies and celebrate the worth and meaning in this holiday

9:00 & 11:00 – Larry Gall, bass

Sunday, May 19 — Music Sunday

Using texts from diverse poetic sources, Clif Hardin's *Requiem* is a musical journey through the experience of death and bereavement to encounter love's power in healing and rest. As we approach Memorial Day, the First Parish Choir offers this beautiful work to honor individual and community losses. May music provide comfort, inspiration and hope.

9:00 & 11:00 – First Parish Choir and Festival Orchestra

Requiem – Clif Hardin

Sunday, May 26

Memorial Day Service — Tony Fisher

One Service at 10:00 a.m.

A quiet service of remembrance, a recognition that “grief touches grief,” and an opportunity to think about the different ways that we respond to loss.

One service at 10:00 A.M.

Nancy Ackerman, clarinet

The Meeting House News, the newsletter of First Parish in Concord, is published monthly — in print and online, September to June — to provide parishioners and friends with information about our congregation and our larger community.

Please send address changes to:

First Parish in Concord

20 Lexington Road, Concord, MA 01742

| Noon Deadline | Published |
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| June: Friday, May 17 | Tuesday, May 28 |
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Newsletter items should be **brief — ideally limited to 100 words** — and may be delivered, faxed or e-mailed to the church office.

Editor's Note: *We are delighted that writers are so enthusiastic, but gently suggest using fewer exclamation marks. A former editor's rule was to use an exclamation mark only to announce the Second Coming — and only if He actually did come. Thanks.*

PARISH NOTES

Finding Your Interim Minister

Elaine Peresluha's hours are the following:

Tuesday 9:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday 9:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Thursday 9:00 to 5:00 p.m.

You may contact Elaine at uurevdoc@gmail.com, or at 20 Lexington Road, Concord, 978-369-9602, ext. 411.

In addition to regular office hours, Elaine makes appointments to meet with people at other times. E-mail Elaine at uurevdoc@gmail.com to schedule an appointment.

Elaine is unavailable, and does not respond to e-mail except for emergencies, on Monday her day off, and Friday, her sermon writing day.

Sponsor the Sunday Flowers

If you would like to provide Sunday flowers for a memorial or celebration, please contact **Barbara Wheeler** at 978-369-9518.

"A Visual Celebration" — First Parish Photography Club's 11th Annual Exhibit and Reception

Sunday, May 5, 2-5 p.m. in the Parish Hall, the Galleries, and the Parlor. Enjoy the photographers' favorite pictures hung in the galleries, ongoing slide shows, 3-D demos, cards and calendars; and have your portrait taken. The photographers will also be delighted to share information with you and to answer your questions. Then partake of the refreshments. Bring your family and friends. All free.



Photography Club exhibit

Sarasa Chamber Music Ensemble

Once again, First Parish will host the Sarasa Chamber Music Ensemble in concert on Sunday, May 19:

“Fortepiano with Maggie Cole” — music of Dvorák and other folk-inspired works. Featuring Maggie Cole, fortepiano; Christina Day Martinson, violin; Jenny Stirling, viola; and Timothy Merton, cello.

About Maggie Cole “...the splendid British-American

Parish Notes

continued on page 3

fortepianist Maggie Cole. In her hands, the delicacy of the fortepiano is no impediment to the power, even muscularity, of the music written for it.” — The Boston Globe.

This promises to be a wonderful instrumental program. Learn more about the Sarasa Chamber Ensemble at their website, at sarasamusic.org.

Two Chances to Rise Up Singing in May!

On Friday, May 17, at 7:30 p.m. there will be a special “Sing-along Concert” by Peter Blood and Annie Patterson, the creators of the *Rise Up Singing* songbook that we use for our monthly folk music sessions. The concert will be at First Unitarian Universalist Church in Wakefield, Massachusetts, and is presented as part of the congregation’s bicentennial celebration. There is a \$5.00 suggested donation. All Rise Up Singing enthusiasts are encouraged to attend! So that folks can attend the special concert, we are moving our regular monthly Rise Up Singing session to Friday, May 31, at 7:30 p.m. in the Emerson Room.

Arts Council Play Reading Group

The next meeting follows the Music and Arts events potluck. Interested members are invited to our monthly play reading group Friday, May 3, at 7:30 p.m., when we will be reading the play “Good People.” Set in South Boston, a sharp-tongued single mom is let go from yet another job. Scrambling to make ends meet, she looks up an old flame, hoping he’ll help her make a fresh start. Contact **Linda Hardiman** for further information at 617-909-1196 or Lmhardiman@gmail.com.

Herb Sale Coming in May

The Women’s Parish Association will offer a variety of herbs for sale during the month of May. Details of this sale will be published in the *Sunday News* and on FPAnnounce. Stay tuned!

Yes, You Can Still Go to General Assembly!

There’s still time to register for General Assembly, which will be held June 19-23 this year in Louisville, Kentucky. Plan a family vacation around the trip and leave extra travel time to visit the Muhammad Ali Center, Thomas Edison’s house, the African-American Heritage Center, or the Louisville Slugger Bat factory, or maybe stroll through the largest Victorian neighborhood in the United States. Louisville is known as Possibility City and was declared a Compassionate City in 2012 for its community commitment to living out the Golden Rule. This GA is an opportunity for UU’s to gather in ways to support our UU principles and worship, witness, learn and work together. This is an opportunity for everyone to grow and experience Unitarian Universalism in ways that we do only when we’re together in one large body. If you are interested in being a delegate or an attendee, contact **Dian Pekin** at pekindc@comcast.net.

First Parish Arts Corner — Fostering Community through the Arts

Each month, in this “corner,” the First Parish Arts Council highlights events for the upcoming month that offer opportunities to participate in the ministry of the arts at First Parish. Unless otherwise noted, questions may be directed to music@firstparish.org.

May 3 at 7:30 p.m. – Play Reading Group

May 4 at 7:30 p.m. - Beatles Night

May 5 at 2:00 p.m. – Photo Club Annual Exhibit and Reception

May 8 at 6:00 p.m. – Arts Council Meeting

May 11 at 9:00 a.m. – Photo Club, open to all First Parish adults

May 19 at 9:00 & 11:00 services – Clif Hardin’s *Requiem*, presented at both services by the First Parish Choir and Festival Orchestra

May 19, 7:00 p.m. – Sarasa Chamber Music Concert

May 31 at 7:30 p.m. – Rise Up Singing, First Parish’s monthly song circle open to singers, instrumentalists and listeners of all ages. (See item at left for a special Rise Up Singing opportunity on May 17.)

For more information on these events, check the *Meeting House News*, FP Announce and the *Sunday News*.

The purpose of the First Parish Arts Council is to further the mission of First Parish through facilitating, promoting and coordinating a diverse arts ministry that inspires and celebrates creativity and connection. The council is open to all interested parishioners. Contact **Lillian Anderson**, chair, for more information: lillianand@comcast.net.



This Sacred Essential Moment, Now.

First Parish in Concord 2013 Stewardship Campaign

As of April 17, we have pledges of \$514,283 from 268 members. We are at 57.1 percent of our goal of \$900,000!

Thank you all who have affirmed this historic moment for First Parish by returning your pledge cards. We so appreciate your support. Also important is that some of you have committed to a sustaining automatic contribution to the operating budget, which allows for better financial planning as the year moves ahead. The Stewards have been busy, and if you have not been contacted yet, please welcome them when they do reach you, and support your visions of belonging and community!

Your Stewardship Team: **Elaine Peresluha, Rachel Baker, Sue Dobbie and Richard Fortier**

STANDING COMMITTEE NEWS AND NOTES

Our April 14, Standing Committee (SC) meeting began with a short announcement about an April 15 advertisement for the position of Director of Operations. The candidates will be screened first by the Human Resources (HR) Committee (who are members of the congregation). Successful candidates will be forwarded to **Elaine Peresluha** for interviews. The HR Committee seeks a candidate with both strong interpersonal and strong financial skills. Should Howard Dana be called as First Parish's settled minister, he will be included in the final stages of the hiring process.

In our monthly discussion of a governing policy, we reviewed this year's activities of SC Evaluation and Monitoring of the Minister. We have engaged in monitoring activities with each month's review of the Minister's report. We have engaged in evaluation activities when we approved the Minister's annual goals. We have also exercised our collaborative relationship with the Minister by reinforcing with the congregation the "go direct" process for dealing with concerns. We have also supported the Minister and staff by taking on extra work in support of operations such as:

- The definition of membership and actual counts of different categories of members leading to a membership report.
- Collaborating on reporting formats to facilitate the SC's review of a "sustainable budget," one example of which was the cash flow time line at last month's meeting.
- The Treasurer's reforming a committee to work on long-range revenue projections to support the staff's budgeting efforts.

The Travel Task Force's report was reviewed and forwarded to the attention of the new minister with the recommendation that operating policies be developed in the fall.

Suzanne Lowe reported on behalf of **Elaine Peresluha** and **Tina Storey** that the current budgeting assumptions are:

1. An increase in Senior Minister's salary to the contracted amount

2. An increase in staff salaries toward mid-points for Large Church One
3. A beginning of a process to reestablish UUA fair share
4. A 5 percent increase in health care costs
5. The Trustees' level funding
6. A \$30K fundraising event for fall 2013
7. All other expenses, the same

• Short discussions on a series of other topics included: Candidating Week, the Called-Vote Meeting, and reports of contacts with other committees. (For additional details, please see the minutes of the meeting.)

• As May begins, we will have begun Candidating Week, aiming toward a congregational vote to call our new minister on Sunday, May 5. May will continue with two opportunities to participate in a Congregational Discussion of our budget on either Tuesday, May 7, at 7:00 p.m. or Saturday, May 11, at 12:30 p.m. We hope to publish an "almost final draft" budget two weeks before the June 9 Annual Meeting.

• As always, you can find copies of the approved SC meeting minutes in the member section of the First Parish website. You may also find recent postings on the SC bulletin board in the first floor hallway. Our meetings — on the second Sunday of the month at 6:30-9:00 p.m. — are open to the public. ♦

— **Jack Nevison**, Chair, Standing Committee

Stay in touch with us at:

• **Suzie Weaver**, skatesuzie@aol.com; **Jake Nunes**, Jake_Nunes@shs.org; **Mark Russell Prior**, mark.russell.prior@comcast.net; **Suzanne Lowe**, slowe@expertisemarketing.com; **Kate Crosby**, kate_crosby@newview.org; **Andrea Siani**, Andrea.Siani@gmail.com; **Alec Walker**, alecwalker@aol.com; **Gretchen Nelson**, ghnelson@me.com; **Patty Popov**, PPopov@nichols-pratt.com; **John Nevison**, jmn@newleaf-pm.com.

Mother's and Father's Day — Not Always So Glorious

The newspapers are filled with ads for Mother's and Father's Day celebrations. Pictures of the perfect mother, father and child are everywhere. Hallmark hopes either that we all will buy cards to send to our parents or that our children will buy cards to send to us. But the reality is that there are many people who do not have children and yearn to. There are also many people who have a strained or difficult relationship with either a mother or a father. And some of us have parents who have died.

So what do we do with these holidays? I suggest that you honor someone in your life who was a mentor or teacher — it could be a parent, an aunt, uncle, or a neighbor. You could honor them by sending a note or giving them a call. If they are no longer in your life, try taking a moment to thank them. Whispering the words "thank you" is so much better than getting caught up in the commercialism of this holiday.

—Diane Clapp, Lay Ministers Team Leader

Easter Flowers Delivered

The Easter flowers were delivered by one devoted church member. **Caitlin Selle** managed to organize and distribute 26 plants to members of our congregation. A big job well done! Thank you.

Pastoral Note Cards

A big thank-you to **Kathleen Elcox**, who creates the pastoral note cards used by parishioners during coffee hour to send their heartfelt thoughts to those who have celebrating moments or challenges. Thank you to all who have participated in sending those notes.

The Pastoral Care Team at First Parish — Walking with One Another through the Changes Life Brings

The Lay Minister for May is **Diane Clapp** atd.clapp@comcast.net or 781-257-5025.

Minister, **Rev. Elaine Beth Peresluha** (uurevdoc@gmail.com); and Ministerial Intern, **Tony Fisher** (tfisher@firstparish.org). Or call the church office at 978-369-9602.

Lay Ministers:
Contact **Diane Clapp**, d.clapp@comcast.net or 781-257-5025.

Caring Connection, for meals or rides: Contact **Tony Fisher** (tfisher@firstparish.org) or call the office at 978-369-9602.

Pastoral Care Advisory Council:
Contact **Judy Dembsey** (dembsey@verizon.net).

The First Parish Labyrinth Is Here!

Saturday, April 6, was a wonderful day, as we actually built the Labyrinth in the afternoon and evening. It was amazing to see it growing before our eyes as some laid the pavers and others passed pavers to them or took care of other tasks, including keeping folks fed and hydrated.

There were over 50 helpers of all ages on building day! Everyone's help was important, especially as our planned schedule of building crews had to be altered at the last minute when the professional contractors did not finish their work on Friday as planned. Instead, the contractor finished on Saturday morning and we began our work just before noon (five hours later than planned!). But with folks shifting schedules, staying longer, and some answering a late-in-the-day plea for more help into the evening, we managed to lay the last paver under lights at about 8:30 p.m. On Sunday afternoon, a small crew went back to add and anchor the edging strips and clean up the site.

The contractor has now been back to complete their work (compacting and sanding the pavers, preparing and seeding the lawn). Once the courtyard grass is well in, the surrounding ropes will be removed and all will be free to walk the Labyrinth. Stay tuned for information about a dedication that we hope to hold before the end of the church year.

The Labyrinth Committee has great gratitude for our entire First Parish community and all that so many did to see this project through, including those who raised questions and concerns along the way. We especially thank the church administration and staff, the Standing Committee, the 50+ helpers on building day, the WPA, and other contributors and supporters.

The Labyrinth Committee

- Darien Smith**, chair
- Beth Dawson**
- Dave Dawson**
- Valerie Holt**
- Richard Keleher**
- Martha Kilcoyne**
- Pam Ressler**
- Bozena Smith**
- Irl Smith**
- Margaret Stewart**
- Dianne Weiss**
- Lois Suarez**, liaison to the WPA



The Women's AM/PM Book Group

The May selection and last book of the year, for the Women's AM/PM Book Group is Caleb's Crossing, by Geraldine Brooks. The evening discussion will be Monday, May 20, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. at the new home of Steph Chiha (contact Darien Smith for details). The morning discussion will be Tuesday, May 21, 9:30-11:00 a.m., in the Brooks Room at First Parish.

All women of First Parish are warmly invited to read the book and join one or both discussions. If you would like to be added to the Women's Book Group e-mail list, please contact Darien Smith at darien@smithquest.com or 978-369-1471.

Note that the final meeting of the Book Group this church year will be a potluck dinner in June, date to be determined, to enjoy one another's company and choose books for next year. All women of First Parish are warmly invited to read the current book and join one or both discussions.

Prayer for the Earth

Because a number of people asked, I offer the following as my contribution this month. It is the prayer from the Earth Day service on April 21, which came at the end of one of this area's most trying weeks.

Dear God, Spirit of life,
We watch as the earth quickens around us.
New growth brightens lawn and tree,
crocus and daffodil, forsythia and magnolia,
mark the progress of the season.

The same beautiful unfolding happens every year,
checked occasionally by late snow or biting frost
but always moving towards its ultimate fulfillment.



Humankind, through its great creativity,
celebrates this annual miracle in music and dance,
through great art and the power of words.

Yet we are equally gifted with the power of
destruction.

We are checked in our own progress,
brought to our knees,
shaken to our core by insensible acts of violence.

Like nature, our response is nothing short of miracu-
lous.

Understanding our own capabilities, we begin to move.
Some clear the way, so that others can rush towards created chaos.
Many pray while others use their skills to comfort and heal.
We wait together
We watch together
Our hearts cry out in unison at each loss
Our spirits are buoyed by acts of courage
We do what is asked
We offer kindness to each other
We gather in community
Looking into each other's faces we see the reflection of our own
bewilderment,
anger,
sorrow,
caring,
compassion.
We are reminded of other times when we have felt this way together.
We know it will not be the last time,
But our response is the hope.
When we are checked in our own progress towards fulfillment,
when we see the underside of our nature expressed by the few,
when our hearts are broken yet again,
In those moments we also become actor and witness to the power of
goodness
and we know, as hard as it is, if we hold these moments in our hearts
even as we take the first fresh steps forward,
There is hope for our species and this incredible planet, our only home.
May it be so, Blessings to you all,

MINISTERIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE



Rev. Howard N. Dana

We are in the Home Stretch! The Ministerial Search Committee (MSC) urges all members to come to the Special Congregational Meeting on May 5 at 12:30 p.m. to participate in the Vote to Call Rev. Howard N. Dana as our next Senior Minister. Take the time to meet Howard during Candidating Week, which began April 28 and ends with the vote on May 5. This is a historical moment in the life and history of our church. Please be part of it.

Lots of information about Howard is available on the bulletin board outside the church office and on the MSC page on the First Parish Website. ♦

As always, please direct questions to any member of the Ministerial Search Committee:

John Boynton (jb@firehousecapital.com)

Terry Rothermel (terroth@verizon.net)

Caroline McCloy (cmccloy51@aol.com)

Mary-Wren vanderWilden (vanderwilden@verizon.net)

Rhoda Miller (rhodamill@aol.com)

Fred Van Deusen (fredvandeu@aol.com)

Toby Smith Ropeik (tsr@tobyasmith.com)

Alec Walker (alecwalker@aol.com)

TRANSYLVANIA PARTNERSHIP NEWS

In a recent communication, Rev. Howard Dana noted, “One of the reasons I am so interested in First Parish is its partner church relationship. I have been to Transylvania once before and found it a transformative experience. I look forward to talking to you more about ways to make this partnership even stronger and more rewarding for both congregations.”

Beginning this month, there’s a “new look” to First Parish’s Transylvania partnership!

First, this article is titled “Transylvania Partnership News,” a change intended to reflect that our news and activities appeal not just to the Partner Congregation Committee, but to ALL with an interest in our partnership with the Unitarian congregation in Székelykeresztúr.

Second, beginning in May, the Transylvanian Partners will hold monthly meetings at First Parish. We began meeting over dinner in members’ homes about five years ago, when First Parish closed for major renovations, and enjoyed the change in venue so much that we continued the practice long after First Parish reopened. However, we recently decided to expand our activities and begin meeting once again at First Parish, to make it easier for everyone with an interest in Transylvania to get involved.

So, please join the Transylvania Partnership! There are many ways — big and small, but all important — to support this effort. Learn more at one of our upcoming meetings scheduled for 6 p.m. in the Emerson Room on Thursday May 16, June 13 and July 11.

We continue to prepare for this summer’s Family Pilgrimage to Székelykeresztúr on July 17-29. This visit will be the first to include whole families and children younger than high school age. This is an important milestone in our partnership!

Wanted: Laptops. As we travel to Transylvania this summer, we will be carrying laptops for the Unitarian high school in Székelykeresztúr. If you have a laptop that is no longer being used, please consider donating it to this effort. The laptops are refurbished by Ed Sterling (ed@edsterling.com), so they can be outdated or even no longer working. For more information, please contact **Dana Booth** at dana.a.booth@gmail.com.

Finally, I would like to extend a big KÖSZÖNÖM to all who helped with and attended our “Evening in Transylvania” dinner on April 27. It was a fun and memorable evening of singing, dancing, storytelling, and good food and drink. ♦

Minden jót! “Best wishes!”

— **Ken Estabrook**,
Transylvania Partner and PCC Chair
ken.estabrook@gmail.com

MUSINGS

The *Requiem* mass is the ancient Roman Catholic rite for the dead. Its name comes from the first line of the service,

Requiem aeternam dona eis, domine (Give them eternal rest, O Lord). *Requiem*.



Rest. The liturgy appeals for the heavenly rest of the faithful soul. It also describes the awful fate of nonbelievers in the *Dies Irae* (Day of Wrath). For Unitarian Universalists, with our “no hell” heritage of universal salvation, the theology of the *Requiem* mass can be disconcerting, to say the least.

Composers throughout history have written inspiring *Requiem* settings, some of which we have enjoyed in services at First Parish. There are beloved settings by Mozart, Verdi, Berlioz, Fauré and Duruflé, to name a few. In each case, the composer made choices in setting the text that reflected his own beliefs about death — or those of his patron. While Mozart, Verdi and Berlioz composed famously frightening *Dies Irae* movements, depicting the horrors of the Last Judgment, Fauré and Duruflé left that section out, focusing on the comforting message of mercy and rest. And then there was Brahms, whose *German Requiem* completely departed from the Latin mass. Brahms’ intent was to write “a human requiem” employing words of comfort from the Lutheran Bible in the language of the people. It may be the most universally appreciated *Requiem* of all.

Perhaps with Brahms’ model in mind, parishioners at River Road Unitarian Universalist Church in Bethesda, Maryland, commissioned a *Requiem* from Clif Hardin, their music director and one of our preeminent UU composers. After hearing the choir sing a traditional *Requiem*, they envisioned a choral work on the themes of death, grief, remembrance and gratitude with words reflecting a Unitarian Universalist perspective.

For his *Requiem*, Hardin chose poems and writings from sources as diverse as those of the 15th century Scottish poet William Dunbar, Helen Keller, Emily Dickinson, Ecclesiastes, the ancient Indian philosopher Bhartrihari and Emerson. Beginning with the confession, *Timor mortis conturbat me* (Fear of death confounds me), Hardin’s *Requiem* moves us through the experience of death and bereavement to encounter the power of love in healing and rest. It is a beautiful, emotional and comforting work.

There is wisdom that says the hardest part of change is not the change itself, but the sense of loss that can accompany change. Over the last several years we have experienced much change as a congregation and as individuals. Inevitably, there is some sense of personal and communal bereavement. It seemed appropriate, as we journey into

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

I listened to the committee members planning. Who will set up the tables? Who is in charge of hospitality? Did so-and-so touch base with the poster designer? Do you think so-and-other-so would share her experience? When will we have the next meeting? And then, I heard, “You know, last year he was really hurt that we did not go with his idea, and we didn’t make enough money.”

The co-creative energy of the planning committee switched into something else. The members looked around the table at each other, collectively took one of those deep breath hesitant sighs, and the air around the table slipped away. No one said anything, but I could hear the wheels turning.

This was my first meeting with the garden club. I had met three of the people only thirty or so minutes ago. One I’d met briefly the night before and the other I had met months before, but had not reconnected with her until now. This was my first meeting, but now it seemed that I’d stepped into the middle of an unresolved conflict. I took a long slow breath and offered, “Hmm... it seems like the garden club has been working through some challenges. Do you mind if I ask some questions?” I asked for general information about the club’s expenses and income opportunities and a little about past events. Then I shared with them my hopes for the free “teach-ins” we had co-created and the regular plant sale.

My primary interest is building community — creating opportunities for people to connect with others. Helping to build a sense of belonging in community. Teaching people how to reconnect to and love the earth through identifying plants and learning from our sage elders. I shared that for me it is not about the money, it is about relationship. Just, right, and healthy relationships.

This is part of what I am here to do with you at First Parish! ♦

In faith and fellowship,
— *Rachel Baker*

Director of Congregational Life

our future together, to acknowledge this sense of loss with a Unitarian Universalist *Requiem* that expresses grief, offers comfort, and encourages us to move forward in love.

The First Parish Choir and Festival Orchestra will present Clif Hardin’s *Requiem* for Music Sunday on May 19, at both services. May this gift of music offer compassion, comfort and rest.

— *Beth Norton*

Music Director

I consider myself an ally of many communities. But I wonder, am I a good ally? How could I be a better ally?

Growing up Unitarian Universalist, I attended gay pride marches and counter-protests of LGBTQ hate groups from a young age. Going to these events certainly helped me understand what it means to show up, but they did not necessarily teach me how to be a good ally.

I only started to become an ally in high school, when some of my best friends started coming out as gay, bisexual, female, male, queer. I didn't become an ally by association or because I wore rainbow sneakers. I became an ally because I changed.

My "becoming" an ally was the result of listening, reflection, and more listening. This process was marked by interactions that helped me understand

my own straight, white, cisgender identity. I came to know the particularities of my own identity through hearing stories from those who do not identify as straight, white or cisgender.

Becoming an ally means listening — a lot. Becoming an ally means understanding how social and political law had been shaped for some identities, but not others. Becoming an ally

means putting my identity aside when it could stand in the way of liberation for oppressed persons. Becoming an ally means understanding that my actions might be oppressive. Becoming an ally is not easy.

To be effective allies, we must show up and listen. We also must understand how our own identities fit into the complex webs of oppressions. We must allow our stories to change and be transformed by the Other — whoever that is. If we forget this, we're delaying our own liberation to the very beloved community we are seeking to create.

I have a rainbow flag on my church nametag. Does this make me a "good" ally? By itself, no. But add some conversation, thoughtful reflection, and a willingness to be transformed and it could make me a better ally.

Are you a good ally? How could you be a better ally? ♦

In faith,

— *Bethany Lowe*

blowe@firstparish.org

Mother's Day Peace Walk in Dorchester

Rev. Margie King Saphier invites members of the congregation to walk with or sponsor her and other members in the Mother's Day Peace Walk, which supports the work of the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute,



a recipient of many SAC grants. To see what the Peace Walk is like, click below to see the video First Parish of Milton created when they participated (as they do every year) in the Peace Walk.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vXNGY2K9Uas>

To learn more about the Peace Institute, go to www.ldbpeaceinstitute.org.

Vegan Potluck Dinner on May 14

Back by popular demand! On Tuesday, May 14, at 6 p.m., Reverence for Life will host another Vegan Potluck Dinner. All are welcome. We ask that you bring a dish that is meat-, fish-, dairy- and egg-free. We also ask that people bring their own plate, silverware and napkins to reduce paper waste and cleanup. If you don't like to cook, or don't have a recipe, just bring a salad or some crusty bread. There will be plenty of food for all! Additionally, we are asking for donations this time of \$1/per person to cover some minor costs. RSVP to **Kathryn Shane** at kdshanel@verizon.net so we know how many tables to set up.

First Parish in Boston Gay Pride Parade, June 8

The Diversity Committee will take a group of parishioners to march with our First Parish banner in the Boston Pride Parade on Saturday, June 8. The parade starts at noon near Copley Square. Please join us for this fun, family-friendly event, and help us show our support for the LGBT community. E-mail **Sara Ballard** at sara@sb.org, or sign up at coffee hour on June 2 if you'd like to participate.

Reproductive Justice 101

Reproductive Justice addresses the many layers of oppression that many women continue to face. Oppression is the control and exploitation of women and girls, through bodies, labor, sexuality and reproduction. It is based on race, ability, class, gender, sexuality, age and immigration status.

As UU's, what can we do?

- Volunteer. Get/stay involved!
 - Fund-raise for local organizations that serve women.
 - Educate ourselves and others.
 - Support leadership and power of low-income women/communities.
 - Take risks and stand up for the inherent worth of all people.
- We want to hear what you're doing or would like to do! Please contact **Lora Venesy** at venesy@comcast.net.

Learn More about Social Action at First Parish

The First Parish Social Action Community (SAC) helps parishioners connect with a diverse and exciting range of social action projects. To find out more about what is going on, join our e-mail list by sending a blank e-mail to SAC-join@lists.firstparish.org; see our website, sac.firstparish.org/cms/sacemaillist; or visit the Social Action bulletin board.

Last month, we had a terrific Easter Egg hunt after the Easter Service. It was so much fun watching the excitement of children finding a simple, colored egg. There were many eggs, but there were many children too. “Just find one, so there are enough eggs for every child.” With those words, the game suddenly changed in a way that made the hunt different. You could no longer pick as many as you wanted. Instead, you needed to pick one.



The search had excitement and mystery and uncertainty. The egg, this eternal symbol of the promise of new life, rebirth, starting again. The colors, the hiding, the wonder: that is the stuff of Easter.



We are in a similar place at First Parish. It is a time when we are hopeful about our future and our congregation is doing the work of choosing our next direction. There is mystery, excitement and even uncertainty. As always, we are lucky to be on this journey of discovery together. ♦



Love,

— Pam Howell

Director of Religious Education

(My new address is drepamhowell@gmail.com.)

Rev. Howard Dana Wants to Meet Our RE Families

Please plan to show up and greet Howard on Saturday afternoon, May 4, from 1 to 2 p.m. at First Parish. I will be there with our families as we make some simple crafts and welcome him into our parish home. It is so kind of Howard to be meeting personally with so many of our parish ministries and groups during his short week of visiting with our parish.

Please, also come to hear the Reverend Dana preach on April 28 and May 5 at the 9:00 a.m. and the

May 2013 RE Calendar

- Sun., May 5 Regular RE for Babies – 4 yrs
Regular RE for 2-4th Grades (Emerson Room)
5th & 6th Grade Neighboring Activists – First Parish Garden
7th Grade Neighboring Faiths. 10 a.m. (Brooks Room)
8th Grade OWL at 4 p.m. (Emerson Room)
- Sun., May 12 Regular RE for Babies—4 years
Regular RE for 2-4th Grades (Emerson Room)
5th & 6th Grade Neighboring Activists – First Parish Garden
7th Grade Neighboring Faiths. 11 a.m. (Brooks Room)
- Sat., May 18 7th Grade Neighboring Faiths. Sandwich-making at 3:30 p.m.
- Sun., May 19 Regular RE for Babies—4 years
Regular RE for 2-4th Grades (Emerson Room)
5th & 6th Grade Neighboring Activists – First Parish Garden
7th Grade Neighboring Faiths. 11 a.m. (Common Cathedral)
- Sun., May 26 Regular RE for Babies—4 years
10 a.m. *One Service Only*

11:00 a.m. services. We will be voting after the May 5, 11:00 a.m. service. Be there with me to make history. Child care will be available.

May Is RE Registration Month

Early in May, you will receive your RE registration materials. In addition to these materials, we will also have two Sundays for you to come and register in person and ask questions about our extensive RE programming for your children — May 12 and 19.

We are trying to add some additional options for parents. We are hoping to add some support staff back to our Babies to 4-Year-old programming so that some parents can serve our congregation in ways other than teaching. This will all depend upon a healthy annual pledging from all of us, every one.

Please send your forms in as soon as possible to get your first or second choice. I know many parents love to teach and serve our children, and I want each of you to get your first or second choice. Delaying costs our limited staff so many extra hours of undoing and redoing work in order to meet your needs. Please

RE News

continued on page 11



consider this as you decide which "pile" to put your RE Registration forms in. Thank you!

Come Together in Our Community Garden

Looking for a multi-generational way to engage with your parish community

and invoke your social justice values? Come and work in our First Parish Community Garden on Walden Street in Concord.

This is the fifth year of our garden. We have been feeding people at Open Table, supplying our RE program with organic materials for crafts, and using produce to stock our freezer with meals for our parishioners in need of sustenance.

We need your help. Please contact me to sign up for a week of caring for our garden. Maybe you will be lucky and can dig up potatoes? Every year, I marvel at how childlike we all become when we reach down into the mud and pull out a giant spud. Now that is living!



Greetings, Friends,

It's hard to believe it's already May! The Heard will be getting together for several special events this month as we plan our youth service and head to the mountains for a hiking adventure.

Heard Youth Service Design: May 5 at 6:30 p.m. We'll be discussing themes, songs, and ideas for our service on June 2. Join us for pizza and bring your ideas to the meeting.

Spring Hike: May 18 and/or 19. We're organizing a hike up Mount Monadnock or the White Mountains.

Please e-mail me to RSVP:

avifirstparish@gmail.com.

The Opportunities Fair: May 19 at both coffee hours. The Heard will have a table and we'll be connecting with fellow youth and parishioners about our events.

YAC: May 21 at 6 p.m. We'll be deciding our trip for next April. Join us for pizza and planning.

Youth Service Rehearsal: May 28 at 5 p.m. Join us for pizza and practice for our service!

The Heard Youth Service and Senior Recognition: June 2 at the 10 o'clock service. We'll be leading the worship service and honoring our graduating seniors. ♦

See you soon!

— *Avi Salloway*

Youth Program Director

MAY 2013 CALENDAR

Listings in italics represent classes offered through the Wright Tavern Center for Spiritual Renewal.

Every Week...

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Gospel Choir | Sunday | 10:00 a.m. |
| Forum | Sunday | 10:30 a.m. |
| Post-Worship Reflection Group | Sunday | 12:10 p.m. |
| <i>Tai Chi</i> | Tuesday | 6:30 p.m. |
| <i>Buddhist Group</i> | Wednesday | 9:30 a.m. |
| Junior Choir | Wednesday | 4:30 p.m. |
| Chalice Choir | Wednesday | 5:15 p.m. |
| Adult Choir | Wednesday | 7:45 p.m. |
| <i>Buddhist Group</i> | Thursday | 7:30 p.m. |
| Men's Group | Saturday | 7:30 a.m. |

| | | | | | | |
|------------------|--------------|--|---|-------------------|--|--|
| Wed May 1 | 6:00 | Arts Council | . | Fri May 17 | 7:00 | Jewish Awareness Group |
| | 6:30 | Intergenerational Potluck – Music and Arts Council | . | | 7:30 | Rise Up Singing – Off-site |
| Thu May 2 | 9:30 | Open Congregational Meeting | . | Sun May 19 | 9:00 | Congregation Life Opportunity Fair |
| | 4:00 | Shawl Ministry | . | | 12:30 | Trustees Meeting |
| | 7:30 | By Your Side Singers | . | | 3:00 | Needleworkers Group |
| | 7:30 | Congregational Life Council | . | | 5:30 | SARASA Concert |
| Fri May 3 | 5:00 | Congregational Life Potluck | . | Tue May 21 | 9:30 | Women's Book Group |
| | 7:30 | Play Reading Group | . | | 3:00 | WPA Jazz & Tea in the Afternoon |
| Sat May 4 | 4:00 | Open Congregational Meeting | . | | 7:00 | Alternative Worship Service |
| | 7:30 | Beatles Night | . | | 7:00 | Amnesty Group Meeting |
| Sun May 5 | 12:30 | All-Parish Meeting and VOTE | . | Sun May 26 | Memorial Day – <u>One Service ONLY</u> at 10 a.m. | |
| | 2:00 | Photography Club 11th Annual Exhibit | . | Thu May 31 | 7:30 | <i>Rise Up Singing</i> |
| Tue May 6 | 7:00 | Budget Presentation | . | Sat Jun 1 | 9:00 | Photography Club |
| | 7:00 | Environmental Leadership Team | . | | 6:30 | Celebration of Elaine's Interim Ministry at First Parish |
| Wed May 7 | 9:30 | <i>Rise Up and Call Her Name</i> | . | Sun Jun 2 | 6:30 | Standing Committee |
| | 6:30 | Concord Area Humanists | . | | 7:00 | Environmental Leadership Team |
| Fri May 10 | 12:30 | <i>T'ai Chi</i> | . | Tue Jun 4 | 1:30 | First Tuesday Group |
| Sat May 11 | 9:00 | Photography Club | . | Wed Jun 5 | 6:00 | Arts Council |
| | 12:30 | Budget Presentation | . | | 6:30 | Concord Area Humanists |
| Sun May 12 | 6:30 | Standing Committee Meeting | . | Thu Jun 6 | 4:00 | Shawl Ministry |
| Tue May 14 | 9:00 | WPA Board Meeting | . | | 7:30 | By Your Side Singers |
| | 1:30 | Pastoral Care Lay Ministers Meeting | . | | 7:30 | Congregational Life Council |
| Wed May 15 | 8:00 | Domestic Violence Symposium | . | Fri Jun 7 | 7:30 | Play Reading Group |
| Thu May 16 | 6:00 | Partner Congregation Committee | . | Sat Jun 8 | 9:00 | Photography Club |
| | 7:30 | By Your Side Singers | . | | | |

MAY 2013 NEWSLETTER

The June/Summer Newsletter deadline is Friday, May 17, at noon.
The Newsletter will be published Tuesday, May 28.

Office Hours: Tuesday–Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.*

Phone: 978-369-9602

Fax: 978-369-8701

E-Mail: FPConcord@firstparish.org

Website: www.firstparish.org

* **PLEASE NOTE:** The office is CLOSED on Mondays.

• Minister's E-Mail:

• Elaine Beth Peresluha: uurevdoc@gmail.com

• Ministerial Intern's E-Mail:

• Tony Fisher: tfisher@firstparish.org

First Parish in Concord • UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

Staff

Elaine Beth Peresluha, Interim Senior Minister

Tony Fisher, Ministerial Intern

Rachel Baker, Director of Congregational Life

Bethany Lowe, Director of Social Action

Gary E. Smith, Minister Emeritus

Tina Storey, Assistant to the Business Manager

Becky Blodgett, Affiliate Minister for Pastoral Care

Pam Howell, Director of Religious Education

Emily Wheeler, RE Administrator

Avi Salloway, Youth Program Director

• Elizabeth Norton, Music Director

• Eric Huenneke, Parish Organist

• Anderson Manuel, Youth Gospel Choir Director

• Gail Carey, Children's Choir Director

• David Huston, Music Director Emeritus

• Dan Holin, Jericho Road Executive Director

• Douglas Baker, Sacristan and Curator

• Cassy Bosworth, Office Manager

• Peggy Gallo, Volunteer Collector

• Kate Keleher, Volunteer Newsletter Editor

• Kaye Harvie, Volunteer Copy Editor



Reminder: Jazz and Tea in the Afternoon – May 21, 2013

Do Not Miss This Fantastic Free Concert!

The Women's Parish Association cordially invites you to its annual spring concert and tea which will take place on Tuesday, May 21st.. Don't miss this fantastic event! The world renowned Fernando Holz Band will bring great musical joy to all in attendance! One of the finest singer/songwriters Brazil has produced, Fernando Holz is in a class with Caetano Veloso, Ivan Lins, Djavan and Jobim. His voice is poignant, playful, liquid and his songs come from the soul. Fernando is worldwide critically acclaimed and his band is comprised of veterans of the Boston jazz and world music scene: Jon Simmons on trombone; Molly Flannery on piano; Jose Pienasola on bass; Steve Rose on drums. From favorite Latin inspired American favorites; from samba to Brazilian pop, from jazz to bossa novas, the Fernando Holz Band charms everyone. They are frequent entertainers at music spots in Boston and Cambridge and the Acton Jazz Cafe. The concert will begin at 3:00 p.m. in the sanctuary followed by tea in the parlor and parish hall. All women, men and youth of First Parish and their friends are cordially invited. There is no charge for this event and no reservations are necessary. It's not necessary, but if possible, please bring along some nicely plated cookies, brownies, bars, etc. to share with others.

CONCORD AREA HUMANISTS and WRIGHT TAVERN CENTER

present

Chris Stedman, "Faithiest"

Wednesday, May 8, 2013, 7:00 PM

At First Parish In Concord, 20 Lexington Road, Concord, MA

Please note, this is the second Wednesday and not our usual first Wednesday!

FAITHEIST

How an Atheist
Found Common Ground
with the Religious

CHRIS STEDMAN
Foreword by EBOO PATEL



Chris Stedman will be talking to us about his recent book, published by Beacon Press, *Faithiest: How an Atheist Found Common Ground with the Religious*.

Chris's thesis, that atheists and the religious can and should work together to foster greater understanding and to increase their positive impact on the world, is surprisingly controversial. "Hard core" atheists label him an accommodationist, while he believes that, "Toxic atheism drives people apart".

Chris is an atheist working to foster positive and productive dialogue and collaborative action between faith communities and the nonreligious. He writes for *Huffington Post Gay Voices*, *Huffington Post Religion*, *The Washington Post On Faith*, *Religion Dispatches*, and *Relevant*. He received his B.A. in Religion from Augsburg College and an M.A. in Religion from Meadville

Lombard Theological School at the University of Chicago, for which he was awarded the Billings Prize for Most Outstanding Scholastic Achievement.

The meeting will start at 7:00 with socializing and a few announcements. Program will start at 7:15, after which we will have open discussion with the presenter followed by more socializing. At 9:00 we usually have an open steering committee meeting which anyone is invited to attend.

Inquiries, or request to be on Email list, please to pne@aol.com, with "CAH" in subject line.



for Spiritual Renewal

The Wright Tavern Center at First Parish in Concord

An Oasis in Our Busy Lives • May 2013

The Wright Tavern Center (WTC) is pleased to offer a variety of meaningful, thought-provoking and creative courses that provide for our infinite spiritual curiosity and development. Brief course descriptions are listed by day of the week. Please see the WTC website (www.wrighttavern.org/cms/courses) for full course details and facilitator bios. To register, call 978-369-9602, unless a different registration contact is listed with the course description.

CONTINUING OR REPEATING COURSES

Tibetan Buddhism

The Buddhist group meets in the First Parish Chapel Wednesdays mornings and Thursdays evenings to accommodate various schedules. These weekly sessions are open to all who are interested in transforming love, compassion and wisdom into action, regardless of familiarity with Tibetan Buddhism. Contact: **Bill Seaver**

Wednesdays: 9:30–11:00 a.m. Thursdays: 7:30-9:00 p.m.
Donations gratefully accepted

Rise Up Singing

This informal monthly musical gathering of adults and children provides participants with an opportunity to sing and share traditional and contemporary folk songs, spirituals, hymns, rounds and chants in fellowship. Singers of all ages and experience are welcome. Bring a copy of *Rise Up Singing* if you own one. Individuals are encouraged to bring instruments if they wish. Led by: **Beth Norton** and **Others**

Beth believes in the power of music to express what is beyond words, to deepen our spiritual experience and to build community. As a singer, conductor, violinist and folk musician, Beth enjoys making music in a wide variety of styles with people of all ages and abilities. No fee required — just come and sing!

Fridays: May 31, June 28 7:30-9:00 p.m.

Two Chances to Rise Up Singing in May!

On Friday, May 17, at 7:30 p.m., there will be a special sing-along concert by Peter Blood and Annie Patterson, the creators of the *Rise Up Singing* songbook that we use for our monthly folk music sessions. The concert will be at First Unitarian Universalist Church in Wakefield, Massachusetts, and is presented as part of the congregation's bicentennial celebration. There is a \$5.00 suggested donation. All Rise Up Singing enthusiasts are encouraged to attend! So that folks can attend the special concert, we are moving our regular monthly Rise Up Singing session to Friday, May 31, at 7:30 p.m. in the Emerson Room.

The First Parish Women's AM/PM Book Group

The May selection, and last book of the year, for the Women's AM/PM Book Group is *Caleb's Crossing*, by Geraldine Brooks. The evening discussion will be Monday, May 20, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. at the new home of **Steph Chiha** (contact **Darien Smith** for details). The morning discussion will be Tuesday, May 21, 9:30-11:00 a.m., in the Brooks Room at First Parish.

All women of First Parish are warmly invited to read the book and join one or both discussions. If you would like to be added to the Women's Book Group e-mail list, please contact **Darien Smith** at darien@smithquest.com or 978-369-1471. **Note** that the final meeting of the Book Group this church year will be a potluck dinner in June, date to be determined, to enjoy one another's company and choose books for next year.

Concord Area Humanists (CAH)

Concord Area Humanists will present Chris Stedman talking about his recent book, *How an Atheist Found Common Ground with the Religious*, in our Parish Hall. Chris's thesis, that atheists and the religious can and should work together to foster greater understanding and to increase their positive impact on the world, is surprisingly controversial. "Hard core" atheists label him an "accommodationist," while he believes that "toxic atheism drives people apart." Chris is an atheist working to foster positive and productive dialogue and collaborative action between faith communities and the nonreligious. He publishes in a number of venues. Inquiries, or request to be on e-mail list to pne@aol.com, with CAH in the subject line.

Wednesday: May 8 7:00 p.m. \$5 donation

T'ai Ji and Qi Gong

Being in touch with our own energy creates endless possibilities within ourselves. By combining music with qigong and the simple movement of T'ai Ji, we can release blocked energy, create wellness, and bring our lives into balance. This class is geared to people of all ages. It offers gentle low-impact exercise to reduce stress, to enhance optimal health, and to simply create a sense of joy in our lives. Instructor: **Mae Pagan**

Fridays: May 10, June 14 12:30-2:00 p.m. \$25/session

ABC Music Together (0-4)

Mixed-age classes offer an opportunity for children to participate at their own level, while the adults (no matter what their level of musical ability) and older children provide models for ways of music making they might want to try another time. Everyone in a mixed-age class benefits by experiencing the music making of those around them — some terrific teaching ideas come from very young children, who have a special originality and spontaneity in their approach to music. For more information and to register, go to www.abcmusictogether.com. Instructors: **Tom** and **Deb Foote**

Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays 9:30-10:30 a.m. 10:30-11:30 a.m.