



The Meeting House News

April 2015

Table of Contents

[REVeries](#)

[MUSings](#)

[RE News](#)

[Social Action Community](#)

[Pastoral Care Updates](#)

[Every Week Events](#)

[Pastoral Care Team](#)

[Standing Committee](#)

[Annual Meeting](#)

[Wind in Our Sails](#)

[The Arts](#)

[Finance Committee Report](#)

[SAC Action](#)

[Divestment Subgroup](#)

[Climate Justice Month](#)

[Partner Congregation](#)

[Denominational Affairs](#)

[Committee](#)

[Jewish Awareness Affinity](#)

[Group](#)

[Speak Spanish?](#)

[Sunday Forum](#)

[Passover Seder](#)

[Remembering Abraham](#)

[Lincoln](#)

[Vegan Potluck](#)

[Portrait of Rev. Jenny](#)

[Rankin](#)

[Tour 24 Farnsworth](#)

[Women's Book Group](#)

[Volunteers Needed](#)

[Deliver Flowers](#)

[History Project](#)

[Ferry Beach Retreat](#)

[LGBTQ Pride Parade](#)

[Photo Directory](#)

[Concord Area Humanists](#)

Greetings!

Welcome to the April *Meeting House News*.
Enjoy!

Worship Services

Maundy Thursday Service
Thursday, April 2, 11:00 a.m.

Tenebrae Service
Friday, April 3, 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, April 5, one service at 10:00 a.m.
Easter Sunday
Rev. Howard Dana, the First Parish Choir and Festival Brass

Saturday, April 11
Passover Seder, reservations needed

Sunday, April 12, 10:00 a.m.
"Strangers in the Land of Concord"
Brian Chenowith, the First Parish Choir and Gospel Singers

Sunday, April 19, 10:00 a.m.
"45th Earth Day"
Rev. Howard Dana and the First Parish Choir

Sunday, April 26, 10:00 a.m.
Rev. Rachel Baker and Lauren Evans, vocal soloist

All Sunday Worship Services at 10:00 a.m.

[UU Summer Camp](#)
[Concord Area](#)
[Thank you](#)
[Editor's Notes](#)

Quick Links

[Website](#)
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Pastoral Care

Lay Minister in April

Carolyn Shohet
careshohet@gmail.com
978-369-6231

Minister for Pastoral Care

Rev. Marion Visel
978-369-9602, ext. 414
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Senior Minister

Rev. Howard Dana
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Ministerial Intern

Brian Chenowith
630-877-5371
bchenowith@firstparish.org

Caring Connection Rides

Suzanne Hogan
978-318-9035
suzanne.hogan@comcast.net

Meals Delivery in April

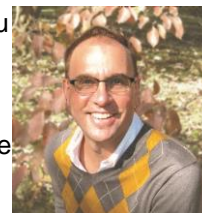
Bev Bringle
bevbringle@yahoo.com
978-369-4793

First Parish Café

Every Sunday, 9:00 a.m.
Coffee, tea, hot chocolate
and muffins

REVeries

Remember how much fun it was to go on a field trip when you were in school? The chance to go see something new and educational. An adventure. Well, come take a field trip to the new Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) headquarters with fellow First Parish members. It is a special treat to be one of the churches nearest our denominational headquarters. The UUA has been a tremendous resource to our congregation in the last few years. And many in the church, myself included, would like First Parish in Concord to have closer ties to the UUA. A trip to see the UUA's beautiful new space will be a good place to start.



On Sunday afternoon, April 26, we will meet at First Parish to carpool to Boston's Innovation District. We will match people to cars and head out. People who would like to get themselves to the UUA headquarters and back on their own are welcome to do this, too. Just meet us at 24 Farnsworth Street at 3:30 pm. There is easy parking in the garage across from the UUA headquarters. Rev. Teresa Cooley, UUA Program and Strategy Officer, will meet us and give us a private tour of this LEED-certified, award-winning, environmentally friendly building. She will answer any questions you may have about the UUA and the work it does with congregations and beyond.

For any who are interested, we will have a reservation at a nearby, reasonably priced restaurant so that we can go out to dinner together after the tour. Then folks will carpool back together or continue on with their own plans in Boston for the evening. Darien Smith is coordinating this effort. I will be along for the carpooling, tour and dinner. I hope you can join us. Darien will have a table in the Parish Hall on Sundays to sign up. It would be good to have a rough idea how many folks want to go. But if you decide that day to come, just show up at First Parish in time to carpool. We hope to get 30 or so people interested in this fun field trip.

Love,
Howard

MUSings

Lately I've been thinking about what it means to "dwell in dissonance." Since early February, the First Parish Choir has been supplementing our customary rehearsal of Sunday morning anthems with exploration of a brand new piece by American composer T. J. Anderson. "Choose Your Ancestors," is Anderson's interpretation of a recent poem by U.S. Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky. The poem is entitled "Chorus," and it was recently published in the *New Yorker*. We were invited into this musical adventure by Rev. William Schulz, president of the UU Service Committee. We will perform the world premiere of the piece at the UUSC's 75th Anniversary Gala on April 30.



And it is quite an adventure. This seven-minute, a capella chorus is written in modern tonal language. The melodies take unexpected leaps and turns; the harmonies are surprising and sometimes unsettling, demonstrating what one critic called the influence of jazz and "post-Webern" styles on Anderson's composition technique. It is challenging, sometimes dissonant musical language and we are working at the edge of our comfort zones as we learn it. In his novel *Orfeo*, author Richard Powers defines dissonance as "a beauty

Every Week Events

Worship Sharing Circle
Sunday, 11:10 to 11:30 a.m.
Rev. Howard Dana's study

Buddhist Group
Wednesday, 9:30 a.m.
Thursday, 7:30 p.m.

Additional details elsewhere

Members of the Standing Committee

Kate Crosby
kate_crosby@newview.org

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daveelwood@hotmail.com

Kristin Haddad, Clerk
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Jake Nunes
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Mark Russell Prior, chair
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Kitsy Rothermel
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Tom Wilson, Treasurer
twilson@wilsongroup.com

Ministers & Staff

Rev. Howard N. Dana
Senior Minister
hdana@firstparish.org

that familiarity hasn't destroyed yet." Each week, for a half hour of our rehearsal, the choir dwells in that unfamiliar beauty of dissonance.

A natural tendency when learning a new song or a dissonant harmony is to sing your part loudly so you can "hold it" against the other parts. As a young singer, I sometimes covered my ears so that the sound of the other part wouldn't confuse me. That may have helped me sing my part, but it didn't allow me to enjoy the sound of the combined voices. Yes, one must learn one's part and sing it accurately. But to create the unfamiliar beauty of dissonance, one must also listen to the other voices. In choir rehearsals, we're finding that we're more successful in creating the dissonant harmonies that T. J. Anderson wrote when we sing softly and listen carefully to one another. That way, we can experience the new, unfamiliar beauty. With this approach, we are making progress, and even beginning to appreciate the novel sound. We are dwelling in the dissonance.

What would it mean to adopt this as a spiritual practice when encountering dissonance in our lives? The tendency is to raise our voices to make our views be heard; or so that we can hear our own views. What if we were to speak more softly and listen more carefully to other perspectives? What new, unfamiliar beauty might we hear?

Blessings,
Beth

Rev. Marion Visel
Minister for Pastoral Care
mvisel@firstparish.org

Brian Chenowith
Ministerial Intern
bchenowith@firstparish.org

Fifi Ball
Director of Operations
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Rachel Baker
Director of Membership
and Communications
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Bethany Lowe
Social Action Director and
Youth Program Director
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Church Administrator
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Tina Storey
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Director of Operations
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dbaker@firstparish.org

Beth Norton
Director of Music
music@firstparish.org

Eric Huenneke
Parish Organist
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Gail Carey
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Anderson Manuel
Director of Youth Gospel Choir
music@firstparish.org

Merill Comeau
Interim Director of
Religious Education
mcomeau@firstparish.org

Dawn Van Patten
Assistant Director of

RE News



We have completed seven Religious Education Congregational Conversations. Some small and intimate, some large and rollicking, these conversations showcased the diverse, engaged, and caring First Parish community. I loved the process! Multigenerational participants identified a broad array of current educational opportunities and expressed hopes for future learning. Many reflected on experiences of intergenerational worship and the priorities to be considered while searching for First Parish's next Religious Education Professional. Leslie Pelton, Caroline Minkin and Lora Venesy are compiling the results, and we hope to share them with the wider community in April. Thank you to everyone who showed up, spoke up, and shared their dreams. And the process continues.

We have a participatory, site-specific, process-oriented art installation titled "Landscape of Learning," currently going up on the back wall of the stage in the Parish Hall. Up until early April, this artwork provides an ongoing, temporary snap-shot of what we want for religious education at First Parish. The Youth Group provided the initial ingredients by enthusiastically transforming materials collected during the RE Conversations with paint to create abstract leaves and sky. Youth also collaged tree trunks to represent the strength of our seven Unitarian Universalist principles. On Sundays, additional leaves expressing children's thoughts are being created with Dawn Van Patten as she visits R.E. classrooms. You are invited to participate by writing your thoughts on cards provided on the table near the stage. Check it out over the next few weeks as voices are added.

Religious Education
dvanpatten@firstparish.org

Rev. Gary E. Smith
Minister Emeritus

David Huston
Music Director Emeritus

Contact First Parish

Office Hours:

Tuesday – Friday
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Address: 20 Lexington Road
Concord, MA 01742

Phone: 978-369-9602

Fax: 978-369-8701

Email: FPConcord@firstparish.org

Website: www.firstparish.org

Church Calendar:

<http://www.firstparish.org/cms/about-first-parish/hours-directions-services/church-calendar>

Sign-Up for Emailed First Parish Announcements:

<http://www.firstparish.org/cms/about-first-parish/e-mail-lists>

"Like" Our Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/First-Parish-in-Concord-Unitarian-Universalist/343822177494>

Reserve a Room:

<http://www.firstparish.org/cms/reserve-a-room>

I enjoy this community and I love the job of being your Interim Director of Religious Education. Doing this important Unitarian Universalist work with you at First Parish I feel close to the Spirit of Life and I hope you do too.
Merill Comeau, Interim Director of Religious Education

Social Action Community

Like so many months around here, this month is filled with a wide variety of social action events. As I look ahead to the spring, I'm most excited to see energy behind making a few of these events speak to people of all ages. So many of our social action events are geared towards adults and older youth, so I'd like to take an opportunity to highlight some opportunities for families with younger kids (although none of these activities are limited to families).



On April 12, all of our choirs, adult and children's choirs, will be joining with Boston church choirs in Hope Out Loud 4, a multi-faith, multigenerational praise celebration at the UU Urban Ministry. This is a great opportunity for people of all ages to go into a new neighborhood, to a different sanctuary, to experience a type of music and celebration that is very different from our own. It's also an opportunity for parents and older kids to learn about the work of the UU Urban Ministry and ways to get involved.

Just a week later, on April 19, there is a bike ride, walk, and rally to honor the 240th Anniversary of the battles in Arlington, Lexington and Concord. This time, we'll be sounding the alarm of our day: the climate change crisis. Climate change is a reality today, and our children will feel it even more than we have. If you've been looking for a way to help your kid understand the reality of climate change—or if you're wanting to learn more yourself—please join us for all or part of the commemoration on April 19.

Finally, on May 10, the Louis D Brown Peace Institute in Dorchester, MA is holding its Mother's Day March for Peace. This annual march commemorates the victims of gun violence in the city of Boston and the surrounding area. While the topic of the march is heavy, the energy is reverential for the lives that have been lost and hopeful for more peace in Boston and the larger world. If you are looking for a way to talk to your kid(s) about the reality of gun violence, and learn more yourself, this might be a great way to learn in a supportive, safe environment. Talk to me or Leslie Pelton if you're interested in forming a cohort of families to march together.

I hope you, and your family, will join us for one or all of these events.
In faith,
Bethany

Pastoral Care Updates

Pastoral Care Six Month Progress

It's been a busy and exciting six months for the Pastoral Care program at First Parish!

In terms of direct care, I have met with everyone who wished to talk about a current or past pastoral issue, and I've been involved in one way or another with almost every pastoral concern that has arisen since August; this includes the concerns of children, young adults, families and older parishioners. But I have focused most of my time getting to know, thank and encourage our wonderful pastoral care volunteers and learning, assessing and shoring up our Pastoral Care program. There are 110 pastoral care volunteer positions filled by 95 people.

Pastoral Care program more clearly defined and expanded:

- Better coordination between the Council, Lay Ministers and the Caring Connection.
- Greater visibility of Pastoral Care and what it provides through my presence at services and other parish events, worship services focused on compassion and pastoral care, articles in the *Meeting House News*, bulletin board, sensitive announcements of those on our Sunday Pastoral List and weekly publishing of the Pastoral List
- Reinvigoration of the Tuesday Group
- Expanding the Rides program to include rides to Sunday services
- The gathering of Pastoral Care volunteers twice a year
- The creation of a one-page listing of all components of the Pastoral Care program
- The creation of a new, easy-to-use reporting tools that facilitate communication
- The creation of a new volunteer job description for Pastoral Care Lay Ministers
- A discussion of the pastoral care budget
- New program development: Friendly Visitors and the Card Corps

Forthcoming:

- "Finding Meaning through Reflection in Later Life" (6-session program)
- "Coping with the Challenges of Care Giving" (2-session workshop)
- "The Conversation Project: Values Clarification for End of Life Decision Making" (2-session workshop)

- "Finding Meaning and Purpose in Retirement" (4-session program)
- Exploring implementation of a Call Buddy system
- Expanding the number of Lay Ministers and their training
- Expanding and updating resources on the Pastoral Care website and library

Reinvigorating our Covenant Groups by building a program to support them is a high priority. This spring we'll work to develop an expanded and sustainable Covenant Group/Small Group Ministry program. First Parish has joined the UU Small Group Ministry Network to benefit from its extensive resources. A Covenant Group steering committee will hopefully come together in the late

spring to prepare a facilitator training and additional Covenant Groups in the fall.

—Rev. Marion Visel, Minister for Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care Team

Walking with One Another through the Changes Life Brings

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Ministerial Intern: Brian Chenowith

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Lay Minister for April: Carolyn Shohet

Email: careshoet@gmail.com Home phone: 978-369-6231

Meals Delivery for April: Bev Bringle

Email: bevbringle@yahoo.com Home phone: 978-369-4793

The Conversation Project – Important Talk

Rev. Marion Visel, Minister for Pastoral Care, will help us explore the Conversation Project Starter Kit. The Conversation Project (CP) emphasizes having a conversation about values; what matters to you, not what's the matter with you. Copies of the Conversation Starter Kit will be provided to help you to think about and talk about your wishes for care at the end of life. And how to talk with family members about their wishes at the end of their life. This isn't about filling out forms; it's about talking about what you and they want for end of life care based on values. The first meeting was held on Sunday, March 29. We reviewed the CP Starter Kit and talked about what holds us back from having the conversation. The second meeting will be held on Sunday, April 26, 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. in the Emerson Room; we will talk about our successes and stumbling blocks. No need to sign up; just show up!

Coping with the Challenges of Caregiving

Providing care for a family member is an age-old act of kindness, love and loyalty. You may be caring for an aging parent, a disabled spouse or a child with a physical, mental or addiction disorder. With the right help and support, you can be a good caregiver without sacrificing yourself in the process. Please join others who are faced with this challenge so that we may support each other and learn some valuable skills to help make the task a little easier. In this two-session workshop (Saturdays, March 28 and April 11, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.), you'll learn how to disarm that part of the personality that triggers anger, frustration, resentment, or any other health-threatening response to stressful events, as well as how to reframe our view of events so that they become objective challenges rather than destructive distractions.

Lou Fackert will facilitate the workshops. She has extensive experience in counseling, education and training, teaching emotionally disturbed children and teens, those with developmental disabilities, mental illness, addiction disorders and homelessness. She developed and leads the groups, Caregiver Supports, Stress Management and Crisis Prevention. To sign up contact Fred Van Deusen, fredvandeu@gmail.com, or use the sign-up sheet in the First Parish front office.

Tuesday Group (65+) Meeting

Tuesday, April 7, 1:30 p.m.

Getting from Clutter to Clean, Part 1

Our next meeting is Tuesday, April 7, 1:30-3:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall and Parlor. Each meeting includes a topic for facilitated discussion. This month's meeting will focus on "Getting from Clutter to Clean, Part 1." Before we can deal with our material stuff, we need to remove obstacles holding us back. First Parish Director of Operations Fifi Ball worked as a professional organizer before coming to First Parish. She will share some insights about why we put this off, lead us through an exercise, and frame some questions for us to discuss in small groups.

The Tuesday Group meets the first Tuesday of the month, 1:30-3:00 p.m. Don't worry about your age; all are welcome, you determine whether the topic is for you. Hope to see you there!

Tuesday Group Steering Committee: Berni Jenkins (contact person) berni.jenkins@verizon.net, 978/369-2876; Bob Andrews, Mary Clarke, Dave Dawson, Susan Dobbie, Patricia Ellis, Bill Maxwell, Jack Nevison, and Virginia Taylor

My Religious Faith Is Important to Me

If part of conveying your wishes is making sure that First Parish in Concord is contacted in case of a bereavement, serious illness, hospitalization or death, then you should communicate your wishes to your loved ones or representatives who will speak for you. To facilitate that process, we have developed a simple form, "[My Faith Community Is Important to Me](#)." Download this form, print it out, fill it out, and save it with your other important documents. If you reside in an assisted living or skilled nursing facility make this form available to your caregivers there. The form provides those who care for and about you with the contact information for First Parish in Concord. It will be easy for them to let us know of your situation, and we will follow up with you.

Standing Committee

The results of the Standing Committee (SC) mid-year evaluation survey are in. Overall it seems that we are making good progress on our goals. Eighty-five percent of respondents know how to identify and contact an SC member. Eighty percent know what the Standing Committee does. Eighty percent think that the Standing Committee is accessible. However, there is room for improvement. We received many neutral or no response answers on three questions: Should we provide more opportunities for congregational discussion? Are we communicating transparently? Are we doing a good job? This suggests that we can do a better job of communicating about what we are doing.

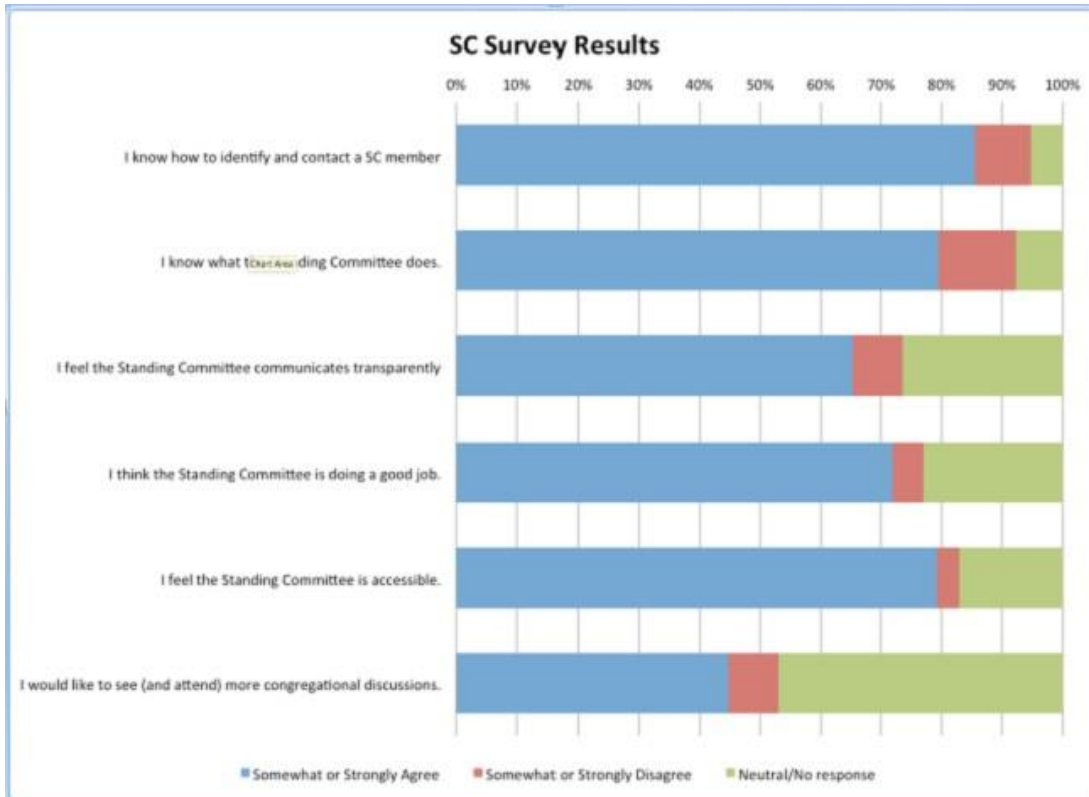
So, what has the Standing Committee been working on this year? One of our major activities has been supporting the annual budget development process. Our new Finance Committee has been facilitating congregational discussions to gather information about spending priorities, and Standing Committee members have been supporting the Annual Pledge Campaign by pledging early, serving as stewards, and helping with other campaign activities. On other fronts, members have been facilitating congregational discussions on a variety of topics, and members have been assigned as liaisons to support Rev. Dana and his staff and the Religious Education Council in their efforts to define our future religious education needs. We have also been developing a list of candidates for the Nominating Committee and have begun the annual review of our Senior Minister. Members have also been working on more introspective projects such as reviewing and refining our governance operating procedures. To address questions about who makes the decisions at First Parish, Standing Committee members created a one-page diagram of our First Parish "collaborative leadership" governance model that explains the relationship between the Senior Minister, the Standing Committee and the Congregation, and the duties performed by each. Recent governance improvement efforts have been aimed at defining more precisely the leadership structure of the Standing Committee, in particular the responsibilities and term of the Chair, and how to create opportunities for leadership development within the Standing Committee.

Standing Committee members are always available to talk with First Parish members and friends about issues of interest and concern. So please reach out to any of us, at coffee hour, at an event, or by phone or email, to talk about your First Parish experiences. If you don't know us yet, our faces and contact information are available on our bulletin board. If you have an account for the First Parish website, you can view information such as our [mid-year survey results](#) and our [new governance model diagram](#) on the Standing Committee Web pages, along with minutes of our meetings, contact information, meeting schedule and governance policies. (Accounts may be requested online on the First Parish website.) Standing Committee Web page:

<http://www.firstparish.org/cms/committees/standing-committee>.

Happy spring!

Mark Russell Prior, chair, First Parish Standing Committee



Mid-year Survey

Thank you from the Standing Committee for taking the time to fill out our mid-year survey! There were 89 Parishioners who gave valuable input that will help us meet our goals. Here are the results.

1. I know how to identify and contact a Standing Committee member.

84.6% somewhat or strongly agree
 9.0% somewhat or strongly disagree
 6.4% neutral or no response

2. I know what the Standing Committee does.

79.8% somewhat or strongly agree
 12.7% somewhat or strongly disagree
 7.6% neutral or no response

3. I feel the Standing Committee communicates transparently.

65.8% somewhat or strongly agree
 8.2% somewhat or strongly disagree
 26% neutral or no response

4. I think the Standing Committee is doing a good job.

72.6% somewhat or strongly agree
5% somewhat or strongly disagree
22.8% neutral or no response

5. I feel the Standing Committee is accessible.

79.6% somewhat or strongly agree
3.6% somewhat or strongly disagree
16.9% neutral or no response

6. I would like to see (and attend) more congregational discussions.

44.7% somewhat or strongly agree
8.14% somewhat or strongly disagree
46.6% neutral or no response

Takeaways:

Standing Committee efforts to be more visible in the community are making respondents more aware of its presence.

Standing Committee efforts to communicate transparently have improved congregational perceptions, though more work needs to be done.

The Standing Committee needs to increase information about its ongoing efforts.

Respondents indicate mixed feelings about their interest in more congregational discussions.

Don't forget...

All are welcome to attend our meetings: Every second Sunday at 6:00 p.m.

SC member info can be found on the bulletin board in the hallway outside the Parish Hall. SC goals and minutes are posted on our website.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Your Standing Committee Members,

Kate Crosby, Dave Elwood, Kristin Haddad, Jake Nunes, Patty Popov, Kitsy Rothermel, Mark Russell-Prior, chair, Toby Smith-Ropeik, Lora Venesy, Alec Walker and Tom Wilson

Annual Meeting

Save the date for the First Parish Annual Meeting on June 14. The meeting will begin shortly after worship. All visitors, friends and members of First Parish in Concord are invited to witness and participate in the meeting. However, only those who have signed the membership book at least 30 days before the meeting by May 14 may vote. The members will vote on the 2015-2016 budget. Look for the warrant and other announcements to learn more.

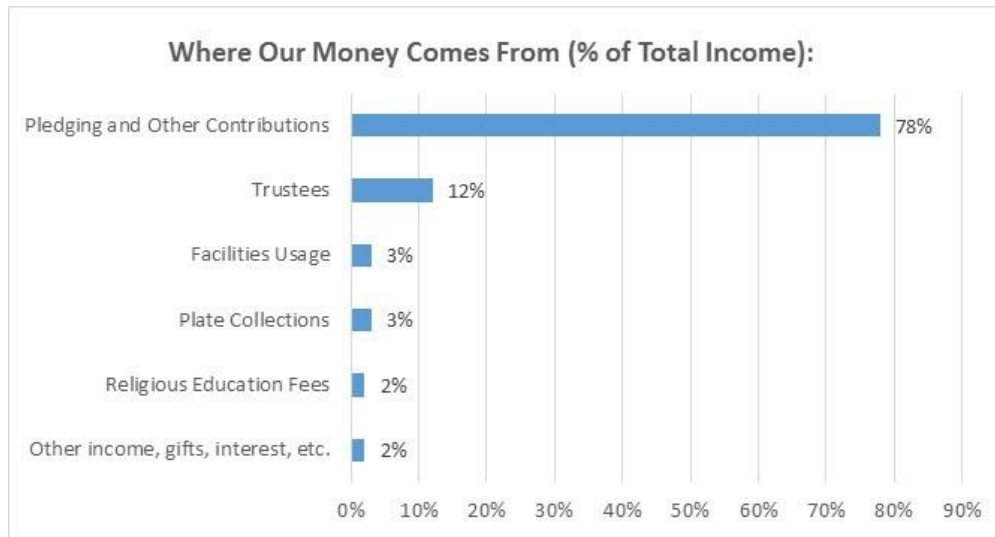
Wind in Our Sails
Annual Pledge Campaign



Can You Increase Your Pledge?

The Annual Pledge Campaign is in full swing. We started off with a bang on Celebration Sunday in March and have been moving full steam ahead since then. Many people pledged on Celebration Sunday, others have pledged online and set up their payment plans, and still others are being contacted by stewards by phone or by email. Together, we aim to reach our targets and continue to support our thriving faith community.

Several parishioners have asked for more background regarding First Parish finances and the fundraising targets for this year. The charts below show the big picture of where our money comes from and where it goes. They also show just how important pledges are to the operations and fiscal health of First Parish in Concord.



As these charts show, pledging and other member contributions account for 78% of First Parish income. A generous response to the Annual Pledge Campaign is essential to covering both fixed costs and other budget priorities. The total pledge amount received by May 3rd will be used formulate the budget that is presented, discussed, and voted on at Annual Meeting. To help guide you in deciding the pledge amount that's right for you, we have identified the budget priorities that can be achieved at these three levels of pledge income:

Casting Off	Under Way	Full Sail
\$998,000 (7% increase)	\$1,039,000 (11% increase)	\$1,104,000 (18% increase)
Sustaining pastoral care investment	Sustaining pastoral care investment	Sustaining pastoral care investment
Minimum RE investment	Attract top-quality DRE candidates	Attract top-quality DRE candidates
1/3 fair share UUA dues	1/2 fair share UUA dues	2/3 fair share UUA dues
No repayment to Trustees	5K repayment to Trustees	10K repayment to Trustees
No staff salary increase	0.8% staff salary increase	0.8% staff salary increase
No funds for historic steeple	No funds for historic steeple	Steeple repair and regilding

This year, the biggest priority is sustaining our investment in Pastoral Care. It is included at all target levels. Pastoral Care was identified as a critical need during congregational conversations last year and at last year's Annual Meeting. Since Marion Visel's arrival in August, the presence and impact of Pastoral Care has increased throughout our community and across all age groups. Pastoral Care volunteers not only feel more connected and supported under Marion's leadership, but they have significantly increased in numbers! Both providers and recipients of care have felt the benefit. Anne Fortier, Coordinator for Pastoral Care says, "Marion's arrival and active, caring presence has infused each of these [pastoral care] leaders with new energy and vision." See Marion's article elsewhere in this newsletter to hear what specifically she has accomplished in her first six months, and what her plans are for the near future. Funding this position out of savings was a short-term solution. In order to maintain the current level of services and fund the Minister for Pastoral Care position out of the operating budget, we need to increase income from pledging by 7 percent.

Another top priority is our Religious Education (RE) program. RE is fundamental to our faith and to our First Parish community. An 11 percent increase in pledging would allow us to offer a salary that would attract top-quality candidates for the Director of Religious Education (DRE) position. A vibrant RE program not only educates children, youth and adults, but it also inspires us to live our UU values every day. We want to attract a DRE who can lead the way.

We ask you to consider the role First Parish plays in your life, in the lives of those you love, and in the lives of others you don't know other than by their need; and we ask you not only to pledge but to pledge more than you pledged last year. Can you increase your pledge by 11 percent and get us fully "Under Way"? If you pledged in the vicinity of \$500 last year, can you bump that up to \$1,000/year (\$85/month)? With your help, First Parish could reach "Full Sail." Just think of all the good we could do!

With gratitude,
The Annual Pledge Campaign Team

The Arts

Fostering Community through the Arts

Each month the First Parish Arts Council will highlight arts events 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.

April 1 at 6:00 p.m. – Arts Council Meeting
April 10 at 7:00 p.m. – Opening Reception for "The Nature of Imagination" photography exhibit
April 11 at 9:00 a.m. – Photography Club meeting – open to all First Parish adults
April 12 at 3:00 p.m. – "Hope Out Loud 4" Praise Celebration, UU Urban Ministry, Roxbury
April 24 at 7:30 p.m. – Rise Up Singing, First Parish's monthly song circle

For more information on these events, check this *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 Susan Page, chair, for more information: srpage10@verizon.net.

Hallelujah Chorus

Dust off those Messiah scores! Easter is coming!

Singers from the congregation are invited to come to the choir loft during the final hymn on Easter Sunday, April 5, and join the choir, organ and brass in our traditional Easter postlude, G. F. Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus." If you have a copy of the *Messiah*, please bring it with you. If not, there will be some extra music available, and choir members are always willing to share. Even if you don't wish to make the climb (or take the elevator) to the balcony, feel free to join in this joyous chorus on Easter morning.

Photography Show

"The Nature of Imagination"

April 7—May 11

On Friday, April 10, at 7:00 p.m., there will be a reception for the photography show "The Nature of Imagination." It will be held in the Parlor, with good food and drink for all. Please join us to celebrate the return of spring in images. The photographers are Terri Ackerman, Deb Allen, Judy Boudrot and Susan Page. We hope to see you on the tenth.

Hope Out Loud 4

Sunday, April 12, 3:00-5:00 p.m.

First Parish in Concord Returns to Roxbury

Once again, all First Parish Concord choirs will be participating in Hope Out Loud, an inner-city, multi-faith praise celebration. All First Parish congregants are invited to come out and celebrate with us. Our joint intention is to bridge communities and families together in praise and music. We will again be joined by the Boston Community Choir (BCC). Led by the renowned Brother Dennis Slaughter, choirs will join the BCC in A Resounding community sing. Other community participants will share in ministries of music, dance and spoken word. Door to door bus service will be provided. Stay-tuned for more details.

Hope Out Loud 4

*Bridging Communities and Families
through Praise and Music*



Featuring:

Community gospel sing led by
Boston Community Chorus

Union United Methodist
Church Radical Praise
Children's Choir

Union United Methodist
Church Dance Ministry

Unitarian Universalist musician
Shawn McCann & his band

Greater Victory Temple Youth
Choir

Boston-area Unitarian
Universalist congregations...
and more!

Plus special contributions from
UU Urban Ministry Program
Participants from Bethany
House, Renewal House, and
Roxbury Youth Programs

A Praise Celebration with
Music, Dance and Spoken Word
Performances

Sunday, April 12
3-5 pm

UU Urban Ministry
10 Putnam Street
Roxbury, MA 02119

FREE to all!

Reception with food and
beverages to follow

www.uuum.org

Contact Rev. Rebecca Hinds for more information
rhinds@uum.org or 617-318-6010 x214

Music Events Sharing Session

Friday, April 17, 7:30 p.m., Parish Hall

Come join representatives of the congregation's Music Events and Music Ministry to help forge a Music Events program for the coming year. We are very much interested in what you might like to see and hear that would be in harmony with the mission of First Parish. It will be a fun evening of discussion, music and refreshments. We'd love to see you there.

—Rob Hamilton, chair, Music Events Committee

Save the Date: American Visionaries

Friday, May 1, 7:30 p.m.

American Visionaries, a Special Collaboration with Triple Helix Piano Trio, the Rivers School, and Composer Eric Sawyer

The Rivers School Choruses, conducted by Susan Emmanouilidis and the Triple Helix Piano Trio will present the world premiere performance of a work by composer Eric Sawyer. This piece, based on the writings of the Transcendentalists, is being commissioned by the Rivers School Conservatory. This concert will be presented in collaboration with Music for Food. All donations will benefit Open Table through Music for Food, a musician-led initiative for local hunger relief.

Photography Exhibit

First Parish Photography Club Members: A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

Please mark your calendars for Sunday, May 17, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., and join us for our 14th Annual Exhibit.

There will be wonderful photos on the stage, the gallery on the stairwell and on easels, a 3D demo, a place to rest and watch a wonderful slide show, cards and things to buy, and of course refreshments. We love to have people come and see our favorite photos of the year!

First Parish Choirs

For information about singing with the choirs at First Parish, contact Beth Norton, Music Director, at music@firstparish.org.

Finance Committee Report

At the annual meeting last year, you voted to establish a Finance Committee. Since our founding in October 2014 we have conducted budget discussions with the congregation, reviewed the external audit report, and completed other advisory tasks for the church. We have learned a great deal about our current financial conditions, and would like to offer our perspective at this time of our annual pledge campaign. We believe it is important for you to better understand why increasing your pledge in this year's pledge campaign is critically needed.

1. **Casting Off:** The 7% increase (or \$65,000) is primarily needed to cover the funds to make the Pastoral Care Minister a permanent job. We hired Rev. Marion Visel last year with the knowledge and approval of the Standing Committee and the Annual Meeting, and knew that we would need to take \$55,000 from our savings. We cannot continue to fund her position from our savings
2. **Under Way:** The 11% increase (or \$103,000) will accomplish #1 plus enable us to use the salary range from minimum to midpoint to recruit a new Director of RE. We need the support to hire a new, outstanding person to serve this critical role for First Parish and our children. Plus, this increase will enable us to provide a 0.8% salary increase (cost of living) to our staff. Plus, this will enable us to increase our fair share dues to the UUA to 50% of what we should be paying. We have used their services a lot in the last several years, and we need to return the support. There will also be funds to reduce our loan on the capital improvements.
3. **Full Sail:** The 18% increase (or \$167,000) will accomplish #1 and #2 plus enable us to invest in repairing the steeple, increase our dues payment to the UUA to two-thirds of our commitment, and pay our loan down by \$10,000. This level will also contribute significantly to strengthening the pledge base of First Parish.

To provide a context, let's look at our current pledge patterns. Over 50 percent of our households pledge less than \$1,000, yet the costs to support the programs and services we receive is closer to \$2,000 per household. Consequently, we have become very dependent on individuals who comprise our large donor group (those who give over \$5,000). Only 12 percent of our households (55 households) provide the funds for over half of the

church's budget. This places us at a serious risk. If any of the large contributions are reduced significantly, it will take a large number of smaller donations to replace them. Our challenge is to increase the base of our pledges by both increasing the number of people pledging and the average amount that people currently pledge.

So consider the following:

- If you are someone who does not regularly pledge to First Parish or only does a nominal amount, we ask you to consider making an important pledge this year. Can you afford \$500? This is about \$40 per month. Your participation matters, and making this kind of financial commitment allows us to create a more sustainable foundation.
- If your household contributes less than \$1,000, we ask you to consider increasing your pledge to the \$1,000 level. This may take a few years, but you can begin this year. For less than \$85 a month you can help establish a new norm for giving and reduce the financial risks we face.
- If you already contribute \$1,000 or more, we ask you to consider increasing your pledge by 10% to 20%. You are one of the many contributors that are the strength of the church's financial stability, and an increase from you can help us maintain the wonderful community we have at First Parish and to reach "full sail."
- Even if you have already pledged, you can easily revise your pledge by talking to your steward completing a new "pledge form" (indicate updated pledge); or go online to the First Parish website (www.firstparish.org) and click on the "Pledge Now" button. It is that simple and that important.

Thank you,

First Parish Finance Committee: Tom Wilson, Treasurer, Gib Metcalf, Carol Smith, Fred Van Deusen and Patty Popov

SAC Action

Congregational Discussion on Divestment

Sunday, April 12, 11:30 a.m.

The Divestment subgroup of the Environmental Leadership Team will meet on April 12 with interested parishioners to receive additional input on its draft article to augment the Socially Responsible Investment commitment already in place at First Parish. The Divestment subgroup has been meeting over the past year and working alongside the Standing Committee, Trustees and the Environmental Leadership Team to research the current fossil fuel divestment movement and possible action on the part of our congregation. This inquiry is spurred by the divestment commitment adopted at General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association last year, and also the recent vote at Concord Town Meeting. Please come to ask any questions you have, and give input on how you'd like First Parish to respond to this international movement. Can't make it on April 12? Join us for our final conversation on May 17 at 11:30 a.m. Questions and comments can go to Bruce Blumberg, Laura Bernstein, Bob Andrews, Kate Crosby or Bethany Lowe.

Hope Out Loud, 4, A Great Multigenerational Activity

Sunday, April 12, 3:00 p.m., UU Urban Ministry, 10 Putnam Ave, Roxbury

Once again, all First Parish in Concord choirs will be participating in Hope Out Loud, 4, a multi-faith, multigenerational praise celebration at the UU Urban Ministry, 10 Putnam Avenue, Roxbury. Hope Out Loud is a time for us to hear a diverse collection of voices speak their truths through dance, song, and spoken word. Led by the renowned Brother Dennis Slaughter, UU choirs from the metro-Boston area will join the Boston Community Choir in a resounding community sing featuring songs like "Draw the Circle" and "How Good!" There will be lots of group singing, so bring your voice and help us make HOPE come alive! This is a great opportunity to show our ongoing support for the good work of the UU Urban Ministry, an organization grounded in UU values that serves the needs of children and families in their Roxbury neighborhood. All First Parish members and friends are invited to come, celebrate and learn. Door-to-door bus service will be provided. Contact Beth Norton (music@firstparish.org) to reserve your spot on a bus. A donation of \$5.00/person, with a maximum of \$20/family will be gratefully accepted to help cover bus costs.

UU Mass Action Advocacy Day

Tuesday, April 14, 9:30 a.m., Arlington Street Church

Come join Unitarian Universalist activists from around the state at UU Mass Action's 10th Annual Advocacy Day on Tuesday, April 14. Events from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Arlington Street Church (351 Boylston Street, Boston) and the State House. We will hear a special message from Bill McKibben, world renowned climate activists and co-founder of 350.org. Our keynote speaker is Senator William Brownsberger, D-Belmont. Senator Brownsberger is a Unitarian Universalist, chair of the Joint Committee on the Judiciary, and strong leader and ally in legislation to address climate change, ending mass incarceration, immigrant's rights, and economic justice. We will also have a worship service focused on the topic of justice. Following the morning program, we will break out into groups to prepare for the legislative meetings at the State House. Each group will be facilitated by lead issue organizers. Participants are asked to choose their preferred issue focus when registering for the event. Register at <http://tinyurl.com/mzuo33z>. The ticket cost of \$25 covers breakfast, lunch, beverages and the building-use fee.

Amnesty International Group 15 Meeting

Tuesday, April 21, 7:00 p.m.

Want to know more about Amnesty's local, national and international human rights work? Please join us on April 21 at 7:00 p.m. in the Ripley Room to hear our guest speaker, Terry Rockefeller. Rockefeller, a U.S. Amnesty board member, is chair of the board's Planning and Priority Committee. Her experience also includes working on documentary films (*NOVA, Eyes on the Prize* and *The Great Depression*), with Murder Victims Families for Reconciliation, and with September 11th Families for a Peaceful Tomorrow. AI Group 15 meets regularly on the third Tuesday of each month from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. If you'd like more information about Group 15, please contact Kathy Taylor, the group's coordinator, at Kly.taylor@gmail.com or 781-718-7640.

Save the Date. Mother's Day Walk for Peace – A Great Multigenerational Activity

Sunday, May 10, 8:00 a.m.

Save the date for the 2015 Mother's Day Walk for Peace on Sunday, May 10, at 8:00 a.m. This 3.5 mile-long march is the major fundraiser of the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute in Dorchester, Massachusetts. Support this organization by participating in the march or by sponsoring Rev. Margie King Saphier and other members of First Parish. Those who attend will be joining other UU congregations as well as over 5,000 individuals. This is a family-friendly event. Watch footage from the walk a few years ago: <http://bit.ly/1Lqpm4k>. Margie will be at coffee hour throughout April to answer any questions. Or contact her at mksaphier@comcast.net or 781-424-2179.

Divestment Subgroup

A Message from the Divestment Subgroup of the ELT: Setting the Stage for Our Divestment Conversation

As First Parish in Concord begins to learn about the upcoming vote for our church to divest from firms identified as contributing to climate change, it's important to put the forthcoming vote in perspective. The UUA General Assembly (GA) met in Providence last June and voted to divest its own holdings in the 200 major fossil fuel extraction companies, known as the Carbon Tracker (CT) 200. The resolution passed in Providence calls on all UUA congregations to undertake an educational effort to learn about divestment and to follow suit if that measure best fits the needs of the congregation. For additional information, see, http://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/documents/gaoffice/agenda/2014_agenda.pdf, pages 98-99. As part of the GA education program on this topic, I heard a panel discussion about the discernment process the UUA board went through to endorse the proposed business resolution on fossil fuel divestment. A transcript of the program, which I recommend to your attention, can be found here: <http://www.uua.org/ga/past/2014/business/iv/296130.shtml>. I hope this recap of the 2014 GA resolution provides some context for the upcoming vote at First Parish Concord.
—Peter Lowitt

Climate Justice Month

First Parish's Response to UUSC's Commit 2 Respond Initiative World Water Day through Earth Day's 45th Anniversary

Environmental Film Series

Tuesday, March 31, 7:00 p.m.: *Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret*. Thought-provoking documentary on the environmental impact of animal agriculture.

Tuesday, April 7, 7:00 p.m.: *Climate Refugees*. Examines how climate change causes the displacement of vulnerable populations, and the resulting global implications. Howard Dana will facilitate a discussion afterward.

Tuesday, April 21, 7:00 p.m.: *Thirsty for Justice*. Explores the lack of access to clean water in poorer communities and the power of grassroots action. Bethany Lowe will facilitate a discussion afterward.

The SHOUT Heard ‘Round the World: Revere Our Climate

A Multigenerational Event! Bike-Ride, Walk and Rally

Sunday, April 19

Hear ye, hear ye! The climate is changing, and it's time to take action. On April 19, environmental, faith-based, civic and grassroots organizations—including members of First Parish in Concord—are coming together to “sound the alarm” about this century’s urgent challenge: the immediate need to address climate change. The SHOUT Heard ‘Round the World: Revere Our Climate will be held on the 240th anniversary of Paul Revere’s ride and the battles in Concord, Lexington and Arlington that started the American Revolution. Again, a united citizenry can change the direction of history!

The day’s events include: a bike-ride along Paul Revere’s route from Charlestown (leaving at 10:00 a.m. from Bunker Hill Monument) to Concord, groups of walkers following the route from various points, and two gatherings in Concord. Everyone will assemble at First Parish from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. for lunch (BYOL) and to learn about local opportunities to take action to address climate change. At 1:30 p.m. we will walk together to Minute Man National Park for a 2:00 p.m. rally featuring speakers, music, participation and reflection. Our goal is to provide energy and motivation to engage more activists in specific efforts to reduce the effect and reach of climate change. For more information about these events and ways to participate, see our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/events/570750993028215/>, or website, <http://shoutroc.org/>, or contact Leslie Fisher, leslifisher@treitman.com.

Partner Congregation

Rodger Matlaga will travel to Transylvania in May as our representative at the graduation of the Berde Mózes Unitárius Gimnázium, the school where many of our parishioners sponsor students. We encourage sponsors of graduating students to send them a card. If you would like Rodger to take yours and deliver it, please put it in the partnership box in the church office by May 10.

The Partner Congregation Council hosted Rev. Sándor Kovács, the current Balázs Scholar at the Starr King School on March 25, who gave an interesting talk on the history of Transylvanian Unitarianism, and changes there over the past 20 years. Our next meeting will be on April 9 at 7:00 p.m. at First Parish. All interested in learning more and supporting our partnership are invited to attend.

Denominational Affairs Committee

General Assembly

Would you like to participate in General Assembly (GA) without travelling to Oregon? You can be an off-site delegate, joining the discussion and voting on issues at home while wearing your favorite jammies! Or while gathered with fellow off-site delegates from First Parish. Any delegate positions not filled by members traveling to Portland can be assigned to off-site delegates. It is quite likely that First Parish will have some unfilled slots available. A complete description of the requirements for participation and the responsibilities of a delegate are available at the UUA site, <http://www.uua.org/ga/virtual/175228.shtml>. The proposed slate of delegates will be nominated at the May 11 meeting of the Denominational Affairs Committee (DAC). All delegates will be expected to attend the June meeting on June 8, which will focus on issues related to General Assembly. If you are interested in representing First Parish at GA either remotely or in Portland, please contact Alice Van Deusen (alicevandeusen@gmail.com). Please note that registration fees for both on-site and off-site delegates increase on May 1. Look for the DAC information table at coffee hour for more information and an opportunity to talk to previous GA delegates.

Jewish Awareness Affinity Group

The Jewish Awareness Affinity Group meets on the third Friday of every month. We are open to all, including Jews, non-Jews, people related to Jews, fans of Jews, etc. We typically start with short Sabbath blessings over wine and challah, and then chat about a topic related to Judaism, watch a movie, or listen to someone who has prepared a short talk. We are more about questions than answers, and more about curiosity than closure. No credentials or special knowledge necessary. For more info, contact Dana Snyder-Grant at [978 760-1129](tel:9787601129) or danasg@newview.org.

Speak Spanish?

Thursday, April 2, 7:00 p.m.

Do you speak Spanish—or want to speak it better? ¿Hablas español, o quieres mejorar?

Please join *otros compañeros de* First Parish for *conversación, diversión, y comida*. Our next meeting will be Thursday, April 2, at 7:00 p.m., *jueves 8 de enero a las 7 en la casa de* Laurie Van Loon, 95 Martha's Point Road., Concord. Don't be shy. *¡No tienes que hablar bien!* English is allowed. There will always be someone who can translate. Please bring *comida y bebida* for a potluck supper. *Para más información:* for more information, *llama a* call Laurie Van Loon, 978-369-8528. *O manda* or send email to lvloon@comcast.net.

Sunday Forum

“Searching for ET: What It Tells Us about Ourselves on Earth”

April 12, 11:00 a.m., Sanctuary

Prof. Eric Chaisson, Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics

One of the beneficial outcomes of searching for life in the Universe is that it grants greater awareness of our own problems here on Earth. Lack of contact with alien beings to date might actually comprise a null “signal” pointing humankind toward a viable future. Astrobiology has surprising practical applications to human society; within the larger cosmological context of cosmic evolution, astrobiology clarifies the energetic essence of complex systems throughout the Universe, including technological intelligence that is intimately dependent on energy and likely will be for as long as it endures. The “message” contained in the “signal” with which today's society needs to cope is reasonably this: Only solar energy can power our civilization going forward without soiling the environment with increased heat yet robustly driving the economy with increased per capita energy usage. The null “signals” from extraterrestrials also offer a rational solution to the Fermi paradox as a principle of cosmic selection likely limits galactic civilizations in time as well as in space: Those advanced life-forms anywhere in the Universe that wisely and quickly adopt the energy of their parent star probably survive, and those that don't, don't.



Dr. Eric J. Chaisson is an astrophysicist at Harvard University and the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics. His scientific research addresses an interdisciplinary, thermodynamic study of physical, biological and cultural phenomena, seeking to understand the origin and evolution of galaxies, stars, planets, life and society. This work aims to devise a unifying cosmic-evolutionary worldview of the Universe and our sense of place within it. His educational work engages master teachers and computer animators to create better methods, technological aids and novel curricula to enthuse teachers and instruct students in all aspects of natural science.

Passover Seder

First Parish Cooperative Seder

Saturday, April 11, 5:00 p.m.

The Passover Seder is a celebration of freedom, thousands of years old. It usually happens in people's homes, centering around a big family meal. Each year, First Parish has its own cooperative Seder. The Parish Hall becomes our dining room, and you are all family. Sign up after coffee hour (yes, after the Easter service) to buy tickets and to sign up for a simple chore—helping with cooking, serving or cleanup. The cost is \$18 for ages 13

through 80, free over 80 or under 7, and \$10 between 7 and 12. Special deal this year: sign up more than one person under 21, and those people pay half price. All profits are donated to First Parish. No experience necessary, participation gently encouraged, especially questions. Our intern Brian Chenowith will be leading; it is his first time doing so. Bring your curious self and join the First Parish family in invoking the movement from bondage to freedom, in all its forms. Questions: contact fpseder@googlegroups.com or call Jim Snyder-Grant at 508 572-2985

Remembering Abraham Lincoln

Remembering Abraham Lincoln on the 150th Anniversary of His Death: A Milestone in First Parish History, Sunday, April 12, 3:00 p.m.

The Town of Concord held its memorial service for President Lincoln at First Parish in April 1865. Rev. Grindall Reynolds officiated, Ralph Waldo Emerson gave the eulogy, and Edith Emerson arranged the flowers. Join Brian Chenowith and the Transcendentalism Council on Sunday, April 12, at 3:00 p.m. for a remembrance of Lincoln and the First Parish service for him. Concord author and parishioner Rick Frese will deliver excerpts from Emerson's powerful eulogy, and there will be period music and readings.

Vegan Potluck

Vegan Potluck Dinner, Chocolate Fountain and Raffle!

Tuesday, April 14, 6:30 p.m.

Enjoy a delicious potluck dinner in the Parish Hall, Tuesday, April 14, at 6:30 p.m., hosted by Reverence for Life and the Environmental Leadership Team. Please bring a dish (4-6 servings) to share that is free of meat, fish, eggs, honey and dairy, and attach a card with the ingredients to help out those with allergies or special diets. Highlights this month are the return of the chocolate fountain and a raffle with your \$2.00 donation for one of two books: *Becoming Vegan* (Davis/Melina) and *How to Be a Vegan* (Castoria). Children are free, and creative fun at a craft table is provided. Need a recipe? Contact Lyell Slade at 978-369-0636 or llsrvd@netscape.net.

Portrait of Rev. Jenny Rankin

A Reception to Unveil the Portrait

All First Parish members and friends are invited to attend a reception to unveil the newly completed, commissioned portrait of Rev. Jenny Rankin on Wednesday, April 15, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall. We will have light food and drink available. Jenny will be on hand to greet those who attend. Part way through the reception, we will pause to unveil the portrait. Please put this event on your calendar and plan to attend.

Rev. Howard N. Dana and Tim Blodgett, for the Portrait Committee

Tour 24 Farnsworth

Sunday, April 26, 3:30 p.m.

Join the Tour of 24 Farnsworth – The New UUA Headquarters!

On Sunday, April 26, at 3:30 p.m., we have a very rare opportunity to tour the new UUA Headquarters at 24 Farnsworth Street in Boston. Join our minister, Rev. Howard Dana, and fellow parishioners as Terasa Cooley, UUA Program and Strategy Officer (and a former Youth Director here at First Parish!), takes us on a tour of the new offices. Come and see how the space has been beautifully designed to honor our history as well as meet the needs of our denomination in the 21st century. Plus there will be opportunities to ask questions and learn about what the UUA does and visions for the future. For more information and to sign up, see the Denomination Affairs table at coffee hour on April 5, 12 and 19, or call the church office. You can also sign up to carpool and/or to join others for an early dinner together following the tour.

Women's Book Group

The Women's Book Group selection for April is *The Orphan Train: A Novel*, by Christina Baker Kline. The evening discussion will be Monday, April 27, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.; and the morning discussion will be Tuesday, April 28, 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. Both meet in the Brooks Room at First Parish. All women of First Parish are warmly invited to read the current book and join one or both discussions. If you would like to be added to the Women's Book Group email list, please contact Darien Smith at darien@smithquest.com or 978-369-1471.

Remaining Books and Dates for 2014-2015

April 27 and 28: *The Orphan Train: A Novel*, Christina Baker Kline

June 1 and 2: *Moloka'i*, Alan Brennert

June TBD: Potluck and Book Choosing for 2015-2016

Volunteers Needed

Volunteers Needed to Supervise Teens Providing Child Care

We would like to compile a list of adults who are willing to be contacted to supervise our teens while they provide child care during church events. Adding your name to the list will not commit you to any specific event; rather, you will be contacted on a case-by-case basis and can volunteer when it fits your schedule. Ideally the list of potential volunteers will be long, so that each person's time commitment will be minimal. If you are willing to add your name to this list of adult supervisors, please email Bridget Neale Paris, bridgetnealeparis@gmail.com.

Thank you!

Deliver Flowers

Volunteers wanted. Would you like to make a fun and loving connection with someone special on Easter Sunday? We are delivering Easter lilies and hyacinths, as well as our love and support, to special folks. If you are interested in delivering a card and a beautiful flower to someone, please contact Caitlin Selle at selle.caitlin5@gmail.com.

History Project

Save the Date

Join us at coffee hour on Sunday, June 7, as we prepare a special thank-you to all who have so generously donated to the First Parish History Project! Thanks to you, we will have a lasting record of Doug Baker's wonderful history of the church and its buildings. Though we will not have a video to show you before next church year, we hope to see the entire church community on hand during this special June coffee hour. If you have not yet donated, please consider going to the website, finding the, "Donate" button and the box that says "History Project;" and making a donation, or bring a check to the church office. Please refer to the letter you received in October for full details, or contact Sue Beck at sbeck345@comcast.net for more information.

Ferry Beach Retreat

Registration: April 5-19

The First Parish Ferry Beach Retreat is May 22 – 25 (Memorial Day weekend). Join families, couples and singles from our own congregation and First Parish in Lexington for a relaxed weekend on the beach at the UU Ferry Beach Camp and Conference Center in Saco, Maine. Registrations for the retreat will be taken at the Ferry Beach table at coffee hours on April 5, 12 and 19, or in the church office during those two weeks. For questions or to inquire about scholarship assistance, contact Darien Smith (darien@smithquest.com, 978-369-1471). As of April 5, the Registration Packet can be downloaded from www.firstparish.org/forms. Also, check out the excellent summer camps and conferences for all ages at Ferry Beach, at www.ferrybeach.org.

LGBTQ Pride Parade

Save the Date: Saturday, June 13, 12:00 p.m.

Save the date and plan to come join a group from First Parish marching in the Boston Pride Parade on Saturday, June 13, at noon. Look for more details in next month's newsletter.

Photo Directory

Next fall First Parish in Concord will create a new Photo Directory. All are invited to participate. Photography sessions are scheduled for October and November. Update your mailing address, email address, and phone number now at 978-369-9602. More information will be available in late spring and summer.

Concord Area Humanists

Concord Area Humanists (CAH) meet the first Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall. Additional information is available on the website, www.concordareahumanists.org, under "Events." Questions to pne@aol.com.

Wednesday, April 1, 7:00 p.m.

David Niose, past President of American Humanist Association will discuss his book *Fighting Back the Right: Reclaiming America from the Attack on Reason*. Is a new alliance forming? Next month: On May 6, Rick Heller of the Humanist Mindfulness Group in Cambridge will speak to us about "*Secular Meditation*." See his video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1JB9Qqu3hI> and his articles in "*The New Humanism*," which he edits: <http://thenewhumanism.org/authors/rick-heller>.

UU Summer Camp

Summer Camp for UU Children and the Importance of Belonging

I was recently speaking with a friend whose child is in Middle School, and the conversation turned to the importance of belonging in the lives of young adolescents and teenagers. The friend was a UU and was surprised when I shared that summer camp at Unirondack had shaped my now grown children more than any other experience in their lives. She had not known that UU summer camp existed and admitted that she was so full of worry that she never even thought to look. This set me to thinking about how many other parents in our congregations are searching for opportunities for their children to live our UU values in a safe and nurturing community but have never considered summer camp. Maybe it is the fact that it is called summer camp? I have many friends who cringe at the term because they were sent to camp against their will as children. So I decided to write to all the parents and kids in all the congregations I could reach to share what I have seen happen to my children at Unirondack.

My 24-year-old son now runs his own company in the tech world. He readily shares that the confidence he has, the public speaking and organizational skills, and the feeling of being safe and affirmed as a human being all began at camp. He was a nerdy kid with a limited circle of friends at home as a teenager, and I remember how all year he would look forward to the summer, to returning to the place where he was accepted and could safely try on different ways of being. My 20-year-old son is finishing school at Oberlin. He has had a wonderful experience. Two things about his teen years have stuck with me. The first is when I went to visit his middle school and on the wall in his English class were the students' essays about "home." My son had written about Unirondack. The second is when he visited Oberlin and came back thrilled with the place, commenting that it was like "unirondack on steroids." I do not think my children's experience is unique. Over the years I have seen thousands of young people attend Unirondack, or Rowe, or any number of UU camps and have a similar experience. I still have a friend in my community who tells me every time I see her that attending camp was her child's only positive experience of belonging.

The camps are almost always full, so if this has gotten you to thinking, talk to friends whose children have gone to camp, or look on Unirondack's website, <http://www.unirondack.org/>, or check out any of the other UU camps and conference centers on the UUA website: <http://www.uua.org/directory/where/camps-retreats-and-conferences>.

All my best,

Dan Gottfried, Executive Director. Unirondack, Cofounder, UUACCC (Unitarian Universalist Alliance of Camps and Conference Centers)

Concord Area

Concord's Holocaust Memorial Commemoration

Sunday, April 26, 7:00 p.m., Concord Town House

The Concord-Carlisle Human Rights Council announces the annual Holocaust Memorial Commemoration gathering at the Concord Town House on April 26 at 7:00 p.m. This year's speaker is Holocaust survivor Pedro Lilienfeld, who experienced the confinement of his father in a French internment camp; the overnight stay by two Nazi soldiers in their home with a warning that the Gestapo would come; and his narrow escape from Nazi soldiers at a train border crossing. Also participating is cantor Rosalie Gerut and Rabbi Darby Leigh of Temple Kerem Shalom. The event welcomes the public and is without cost.

Thank you

Dear Members and Friends of First Parish in Concord,

Thank you for your gift of a preaching robe, other gifts of support, personal cards and emails, and your presence at my ordination. I am deeply grateful for the part that you all have played in my ministerial formation and ministry.

Blessings,

Rachel Baker

Editor's Notes

Next Meeting House News deadline:

Tuesday, April 21, 11:59 p.m. (yes, the middle of the night)

Email submissions, either in the body of the email or as an attached Word document (not a PDF), to Rachel Baker at rbaker@firstparish.org. Inserts will no longer be possible, due to the new format.

Limit articles to 100 words. I will send them back to you next month, if they are too long.

Next publication date:

Tuesday, May 5, 2015

First Parish in Concord, Massachusetts, is a welcoming congregation seeking ways to deepen spiritually, build community, and make a positive difference in the world.

A Member Congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association.