

Meeting House News

December 2015



Christmas Eve 2010

*The MHN deadlines and publication dates are listed at the end of this newsletter under **Editor's Notes**. If you are submitting, please put the deadline in your calendar to minimize last minute emails.
Thank you!*



If you are not signed up to receive the very helpful FP Announce emails, you can do so [here](#).

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From FP Facebook page

Do you have pictures of First Parish you'd like to share? If so, please send a JPEG as an *attachment* to the Editor.

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<http://metrocard.levradin.com/2013/11/05/december-holidays/>

Worship This Month

All Sunday Worship Services are held at 10:00 a.m. The First Parish Café is available for fellowship and light fare before services at 9:00 a.m.

Sunday, December 6 – “Jesus’ Imperfect Family”

Rev. Howard Dana

First Parish Choir and Festival Strings – selections from Handel’s *Messiah*

Sunday, December 13 – “Don’t Let the Light Go Out”—Hanukkah, Festival of Lights

Rev. Howard Dana

First Parish Choir

Sunday, December 20 – “Winter Solstice”

Rev. Howard Dana and Rev. Amy Freedman

First Parish Choir

Sunday, December 27

Rev. Aaron Stockwell

The Conchords

Sunday, January 3 – “The Fireplace Line”

Rev. Howard Dana

Pamela Schweppe, soprano



Blue Holidays Vespers

“Dark of Winter” – Tuesday, December 15, 7:30 p.m. in the Chapel

For those who are less than joyous this holiday season, come, breathe, and gather your thoughts in the quiet beauty of candles, music and understanding. Rev. Marion Visel, and Beth Norton and the By Your Side Singers, will offer a holiday alternative, a quiet space to share reflective words of remembrance, solace and comfort. Though the winter holidays are not always merry, this time can be a time of loving kindness and gentle community. All are welcome.

Christmas Eve Services

There will be *four* services at First Parish on Christmas Eve this year.

- ♥ **NEW – Family Service! 3:00 p.m., Carols and a Crèche** – we’ll share the Christmas story by building the nativity together and carol singing
- ♥ **5:00 p.m., Family Christmas Eve Service** – Nativity tableau, carol singing and music by our Children’s Choirs
- ♥ **7:00 p.m., Traditional Lessons and Carols** – music by the Gospel Choir
- ♥ **9:00 p.m., Traditional Lessons and Carols** – music by the First Parish Choir

MUUsings

“For unto us a child is born . . .”

I first sang Handel’s *Messiah* when I was thirteen years old. With my sister and some of her high school chorus friends, I joined an adult church choir in the western part of our state as a young “ringer” to swell their ranks for a Christmas concert. I still recall the challenge of navigating the long melismatic runs in some of the choruses for the first time. I remember the kindness and encouragement of the adult singers and the excitement of sharing this great oratorio with an enthusiastic audience.



Later, for several years during the 1980’s, I sang annual *Messiah* performances in Carnegie Hall with a large community choir. Singing in that historic hall, with its amazing acoustics was awe inspiring. The conductor usually hired a few “ringers” to beef up that chorus. One year I was appalled to notice the hired soprano next to me reading a magazine (on stage!) during the solo passages. I vowed never to adopt such a blasé attitude in any musical performance. I have sung the *Messiah* and conducted portions of it—especially the *Hallelujah Chorus*—countless times since that first Christmas. Familiarity only deepens my respect for the composer and his work.

George Frederick Handel [1685-1759] composed *The Messiah* for the Easter season in 1749. He knew that his oratorio was unorthodox. His other oratorios had strong, dramatic plot lines based on stories and characters from the Bible and classical mythology. For *The Messiah*, Handel’s librettist drew from Biblical prophecies, Psalms and Epistles to reflect on the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus. Only a few movements include narrative about Jesus’ life from the Gospels. Yet the work creates an unforgettable musical portrait of the one named by Christians as the Messiah.

On Sunday morning, December 6, the First Parish Choir and Festival Strings will offer several movements from the Christmas section of Handel’s *Messiah*. You will hear the majestic “Overture,” the decorative and celebratory “For Unto Us a Child is Born,” the serene “Pastoral Symphony” and, one of my favorites, the dramatic announcement of Jesus’ birth sung by soprano soloist and chorus. Some choir members have been singing these movements for years. Others are exploring Handel’s choruses for the very first time. All of us look forward to sharing the wonder of this music and this season with you.

Blessings, Beth
Beth Norton, Director of Music

Christmas Caroling

Sunday, December 20, at 1:00 p.m.; meet in the hallway outside the Parish Hall

This is what the Christmas season is all about! Children and adults are invited to bring the gift of musical cheer to our parishioners and others who can't get out this season. We will meet at the Church outside the Parish Hall and carpool to area nursing homes to sing. Afterward, we'll head back to First Parish to enjoy cookies and hot chocolate together. All are welcome! Please feel free to bring cookies to share.



For more information, please contact Lora Venesy at 978-254-5433 or venesy@comcast.net or Dawn Van Patten at dvanpatten@firstparish.org

Rise Up Caroling

Friday, December 18, 7:30 p.m.

This is the annual “holiday edition” of Rise Up Singing, First Parish’s monthly song circle. Singers of all ages are invited to bring their voices, instruments and cookies to share. Carol lyrics and sheet music for instrumentalists will be provided.

Lincoln Ringers’ Candlelight Concert

Tuesday, December 22, 7:00 p.m. at First Parish in Lincoln—Free



Holiday bells are ringing! Please join the Lincoln Ringers for their annual Candlelight Concert in the charming sanctuary of First Parish in Lincoln. You’ll be treated to an evening of Christmas carols and holiday favorites, both sacred and secular. All ages are welcome.

Community Choir Forming

Rehearsals: Tuesdays: January 26, February 23, March 29

Light supper 6:30 - 7:00 p.m., rehearsal 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Performance: Sunday, April 10, at 3:00 p.m., arrive at 1:30 p.m.

Sam Martinborough, director of MssgLnks in Boston, will be forming a community choir that will sing as part of *Hope Out Loud* this year on April 10. Our UU regional churches are invited to participate in this cross-cultural celebration. Mark your calendars with the dates below. Please be willing to commit to at least two of the three rehearsals—with March being a critical rehearsal. All rehearsals will happen at the Urban Ministry, 10 Putnam Street in Roxbury. A light supper will be provided from 6:30 to 7:00 p.m.. Rehearsal will begin at 7:00 p.m. and go no later than 8:30 p.m.. We will be singing together in concert on Sunday, April 10. For more information on UUUM events, visit <http://www.uuum.org/>.

REflections

Seven Ways to Savor the Holidays Especially for Families with Children



1. **Enjoy Traditional Foods**

Cooking together is a great way to connect with children. Enjoying special recipes or buying traditional holiday foods is also a fun and delicious way to pass on your family history and culture.

2. **Share Stories**

The holidays are filled with wonderful stories to share. Take time to tell stories about past celebrations, snuggle up with treasured picture books, and ask children which stories they would like to revisit. Stories give holidays meaning.

3. **Practice Rituals**

Whether it is saying grace at dinnertime, sharing what you are grateful for at bedtime, or lighting a candle with special words, having a centering practice as a family will make this season more spiritually renewing.

4. **Spend Time Outdoors**

Make sure you take time each day to go outdoors! Children need time to run around and play. Also, going out together in the darkness to see Christmas lights is a magical and memorable way to experience the wonder of this season.

5. **Create Quiet Moments**

Holidays can be noisy and overwhelming for all ages. Bring peace and comfort into your home by creating “quiet time” to read, draw, write, or simply sit together and share.

6. **Give from the Heart**

Encourage children to make or purchase thoughtful presents. Instead of spending lots of money, older family members will appreciate original artwork, photographs, homemade treats or experiences to be shared together next year.

7. **Be of Service to Others**

Generosity is the true spirit of this season. There are many opportunities to be of service, including gift drives, caroling in senior centers, doing errands for an elderly, friend or relative, or decorating a tree with edible treats for the birds. Making service a priority during the holidays models for children the value of helping others.

Above all, do not let the commercialism and busyness of this season crowd out what matters most—**Gratitude, Wonder and Love.**



Blessings,
Rev. Amy Freedman, Minister of Religious Education
afreedman@firstparish.org

Sock Puppet-Palooza!

Do you have any extra socks? If you have any spare socks that you are willing to donate for puppet making, we promise to put them to good use. Please drop them off in the Religious Education Office. Thank you!

RE News

Upcoming December Events: RE and Family

- 5 Elf Workshop, 1:30 – 4:30 p.m.
- 6 Little Angels, 10:00 a.m.
- 13 Grade 8 Show, 10:15 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.
- 20 Winter Solstice Intergenerational Service
- 24 Christmas Eve Services: 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00 p.m.
- 27 Chapel: K – Grade 7 and Little RE



Pastoral Care

Walking with One Another through the Changes Life Brings.

Minister for Pastoral Care, Rev. Marion Visel

Email: mvisel@firstparish.org

Church: 978-369-9602, ext. 414

Cell: 203-931-5329



Senior Minister, Rev. Howard N. Dana

Email: hdana@firstparish.org

Church: 978-369-9602, ext. 411

Cell: 717-412-8543



December Pastoral Care Lay Minister, Susan Dobbie

Email: susandobbie@gmail.com

Phone: 978-456-8432

Cell: 978-501-6969

December Meals Delivery, Pat Kane

Email: cstmcloth@yahoo.com

Phone: 978-369-8418

Holiday Memorial Wreath

The Holiday Memorial Wreath will be located at the front of the Sanctuary beginning the first Sunday in Advent. It is a way to acknowledge the memory of a loved one who has died. Tie a ribbon to the wreath for those you wish to remember. The wreath will remain in the Sanctuary through the holidays.

Come to Cook

Friday, December 11, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon, First Parish Kitchen



As part of our shared Pastoral Care outreach, the Caring Connection of First Parish provides delicious meals for parishioners during times of transition. We're going to cook and you're invited to help! No experience or skills necessary. Recipes and provisions provided. Breakfast snacks will be served! RSVP to Judy Dembsey at dembsey@verizon.net or 978-263-3272.

Social Action Community

Movement Moment

Last month, I wrote to you about “movement moments.” This is a term used in the social action world to refer to a time when a certain issue is getting a lot of attention over a prolonged period of time.

When we are in movement moments, we can learn much more quickly than when we are not in movement moments. Think: the Civil Rights Movement, the AIDS crisis in the 1990’s, marriage equality in the 2000’s. Our current movement moment—the Black Lives Matter movement—is one that is changing the way we think about racial justice and power in our country.



In the past few months, I have felt us shift as a congregation. In early October, we started wearing Black Lives Matter buttons. By November, we were handing out yard signs. In December, the Standing Committee will vote on whether the church should hang a Black Lives Matter banner on the church property (see article in this MHN). In the course of just three months, we have taken a leap into this movement moment. Now we hang on for the ride.

Things are moving fast these days. There is too much information for us to absorb it all. And there is so much we can learn from each other in this movement moment. If you have any questions about the Black Lives Matter movement, or what it means to support this movement as a congregation, I am always happy to chat. If you have concerns about hanging a banner on our church, I am all ears.

I hope to hear from you.

In faith,

Bethany Russell-Lowe,

Social Action Director and Youth Program Director

Amnesty International Group

Tuesday, December 15, 7:00-8:30 p.m.



"Amnesty members have spoken for us when we could not speak," says Jenni Williams, a former prisoner of conscience in Zimbabwe. From December 4 through December 18, in recognition of the UN's Human Rights Day, activists in more than 200 countries and territories across the globe will be sending letters on behalf of those whose human rights have been violated. All are welcome to join Group 15 in Amnesty's Write for Rights on the 15th. If you can't make the meeting but would like to be a part of this worldwide action, go to write.amnestyusa.org. Group 15 meets on the third Tuesday of each month from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. in the Greeley room. For more information, contact Kathy Taylor at Kly.taylor@gmail.com.

Prison Outreach Holiday Project

Coatroom box available for donations November 18 - December 7

Please help again this year with the Holiday Gift Bag Project for our prison neighbors. Specified gift items can be left in the box in the coatroom from Wednesday, November 18 through Tuesday, December 7.

For all the information on how to participate, go to www.ConcordPrisonOutreach.org and click on "Read More," or pick up a flyer during FP Café or coffee hour on Sundays November 29 and December 6. Any questions, contact Don Miller (donaldbmiller@comcast.net) or 978-610-6298. Thank You.



Benefit Concert Coffeehouse

Saturday, January 16, at 7:30 p.m., Parish Hall

Brought to you by the Diversity Committee—a First Parish Coffeehouse with talented performers singer/songwriters and First Parish members Anna Huckabee Tull and Eric Kilburn. They will sing mostly original songs of struggle, loss, growth, freedom and celebration. This will be a benefit for a Boston area racial justice organization. A donation of \$20 is suggested. Look for more details in the January *Meeting House News* and plan to come! Your presence helps make it special.



SAC Candlelighters Needed

Have you ever been moved to act? Do you consider yourself a helper? An activist? If so, Bethany would love to hear from you. The worship team is looking for volunteers to light the SAC candles this church year. Contact Bethany Russell-Lowe for more information: Blowe@firstparish.org.

Black Lives Matter Banner Proposal

Meeting on Sunday, December 13, 6:00 p.m. at First Parish

In October, First Parish began a congregation-wide conversation about the Black Lives Matter movement. Members were provided with the opportunity to wear Black Lives Matter buttons, and were encouraged when they wore them to be open to conversation and to be aware of the reactions they received from others. Recently, several members of the congregation expressed interest in making an outward statement of conscience to the greater Concord community by hanging a Black Lives Matter banner on First Parish church property. The Standing Committee will be considering this proposal at our next Standing Committee meeting on Sunday, December 13, 2015. If you would like



additional information about First Parish Black Lives Matter activities, contact Social Action Director Bethany Russell-Lowe. And please feel free to share your opinions with your Standing Committee representatives.

Waking Up White Reading Group **Starting in January**

This fall, a small group of members concerned with racial justice issues has been reading Debby Irving's *Waking Up White* in a small group ministry format. Starting in January, they will be inviting members of the congregation to participate in small group discussions of this book. We will read a few chapters a month and come together to discuss what we read. The discussion will focus on exploring our own racial identities, and what we learn from Debby Irving's experience. If you are interested in being part of a small group, contact Bethany Russell-Lowe (Blowe@firstparish.org).

UU Teens—Year of Learning

Wednesdays: December 9, January 13, February 10, March 9, April 13, May 11
6:00 - 7:30 p.m.; Dinner Included

The UU Urban Ministry (UUUM) is calling all Unitarian Universalist teens! Join with the youth in the Roxbury Youth Program for "Environmental Justice in the City," a year of learning, sharing, and justice making as we explore the intersections of environmental and racial injustice. Facilitated by Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE), a Roxbury-based nonprofit.

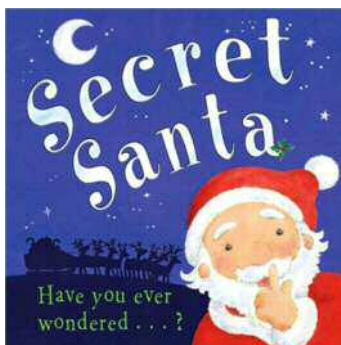


Antiracism Conference

Saturday, January 23, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Save the date! UUUM will be hosting an antiracism conference at the UUUM. Stay tuned for more details.

Secret Santa Volunteers Needed **Two to Three Hours in December**



Secret Santa will be coming back this holiday season, but only if you sign up to help! Secret Santa is a holiday program in which First Parish members fulfill wish lists of children and families who cannot afford to purchase gifts this year. This is a great activity to do with kids, and can fit in easily with the holiday shopping you're already doing. We are looking for folks who have two or three hours to commit in December to help this program be successful. Volunteer opportunities include creating gift "tags," distributing tags at coffee hours, organizing gifts, and dropping gifts off at partner organizations. If you would like to give two or three hours to help make this program a success, get in touch with Tricia Haut (thaut@mac.com) or Bethany Russell-Lowe (blowe@firstparish.org).

Standing Committee News

Congregational Financial Discussions

Thank you to all who attended the Finance Committee's congregational discussions concerning First Parish finances. Attendees learned about how our money is spent and also shared ideas about how our finances can be improved. All of the ideas shared will inform the upcoming Annual Pledge Campaign and budget development process.

Annual Goals

Standing Committee members have finalized five goals for the current year along with actions we plan to take and the measurable outcomes we hope to achieve.

1. Improve Standing Committee operational effectiveness
2. Model healthy/right relations in Standing Committee communications
3. Function with a proactive outward vision
4. Build a culture of stewardship
5. Provide support for our senior minister

Interests and Concerns

Standing Committee members are always eager to talk with First Parish members and friends about issues of interest and concern. 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 have an account for the First Parish website, you can go to the Standing Committee Web page and view minutes of our meetings, contact information, meeting schedule, and governance policies.

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

Happy holidays to all!

Mark Russell Prior, chair, First Parish Standing Committee

Finance Committee Projects

Tuesday, December 1, 7:30-9:00 a.m. (yes, that's A.M.); Brooks Room

The Finance Committee is working on three projects this fall.

1. In October we initiated a financial benchmarking survey, seeking data from local churches as well as UU churches of relevant size in various locations. Our goal is to better understand how First Parish fundraising and spending compare with those of other congregations. Responses began arriving in November and analysis is under way.
2. In November we hosted two congregational listening sessions to hear about and understand congregational spending priorities, and discuss our current budget. Information gathered will be fed into the annual budgeting and pledge campaign planning processes.
3. The Finance Committee is also reviewing First Parish financial policies to confirm that they still meet our needs considering revisions where they do not.



The Finance Committee usually meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30 a.m. (in the morning). All are welcome to attend. For more information, please see our Web page at <http://www.firstparish.org/cms/committees/finance-committee>.

Patty Popov, for the Finance Committee

Denominational Affairs Committee

Tuesday, January 19, 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.; Brooks Room



As UU's, we build our faith in our personal lives, in congregations and communities, and in the world. To meet UU's from across the country and the world, consider attending the 55th annual General Assembly (GA) of the Unitarian Universalist Association in June of 2016 in Columbus, Ohio. Here we will learn, share, rejoice and much more.



The theme for GA 2016 will be "Heart Land: Where Faiths Connect." <http://www.uua.org/ga> Join us for face-to-face gatherings, as well as online from your home or offsite at FP. Look for more information, as registration will begin next March. We are connected to many congregations as well as the UUA headquarters in Boston. Learn what you can do. Contact Paula Vandever at VandeverP@aol.com.

Human Resources Professional

Volunteer Wanted

Do you find health insurance fascinating? Want to help First Parish explore the Massachusetts Unemployment Tax System? Understand Section 125 or the Mass. Form 3ABC? If so, your Director of Operations needs you. She would like to form an HR committee for help with these topics and more—a working group to research, propose and implement improvements to our current benefits and other HR systems. Time commitment? As little or as much as you've got—occasional consults and/or ongoing work would all be valuable. Please contact Fifi Ball at fball@firstparish.org. Thank you.

Tuesday Group's Winter Celebration

December 1, from 1:30 - 3:00 p.m., Parlor Fireplace

The First Tuesday Group (65+) meets for a winter holiday celebration. Gather around the fire in the Parlor fireplace, listen to selected readings, sing a few seasonal songs, and bargain with others in a Yankee Swap. Please bring a small used item that you no longer need—silly or amusing but clean—in a paper bag. Refreshments will include eggnog, a table of cookies, coffee, tea, and your favorite holiday snacks, if you bring a plate to share. So get rid of an unwanted bit of household clutter, and come celebrate the holidays at the first party in the month of December!



Sunday Forums

New Developments

First Parish Sunday Forums are entering a new chapter. Charles Lowell and Sally Schloemann, who successfully led the Forum Committee for a long time, have now resigned for a well-deserved rest. We thank them for their years of hard work in keeping the Forums going.

Pat Everett has been chosen as the new chair. He thanks Charles and Sally for being enormously helpful in the transition. Pat plans to continue the Forums with the help of an already enlarged committee who share the goal of increase their frequency. Some topics planned for January and early February include: "Paving the Path to a Manned Mission to Mars," "Reproductive Justice," "Green Sanctuary" and "Bruce Freeman Rail Trail."

If you would like to help to strengthen the committee further, please contact Pat at pne@aol.com with 'Forum' in the subject line.

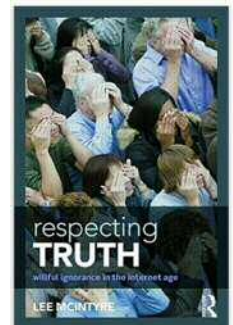
Concord Area Humanists

Wednesday, December 2, at 7:00 p.m., Parish Hall, Lee McIntyre

Wednesday, January 6, at 7:00 p.m., Parish Hall, Maria Greene



Lee McIntyre will speak to us about his new book, *Respecting Truth: Willful Ignorance in the Internet Age*. He says, "humans have always indulged in certain irrationalities and held some fairly wrong-headed beliefs. But I argue that we've now reached a watershed moment..." In January, Maria Greene will speak on "Lifelong Learning for Free Using the Internet". For more on both talks, visit www.ConcordAreaHumanists.org and click on "Events."



New Membership Committee

A new membership committee has formed, dedicated to making progress on three things this year that are especially important as people find and join a large church such as ours. We've already seen some new ideas taking hold.

1. We provide a welcoming experience for new people on Sunday mornings. Contact Karen Sullivan (consul.3@verizon.net).
2. We offer a clear way to sign the book and join the church. Contact Kristin Haddad (Kristin.haddad@gmail.com).
3. We track and follow up with new members after they join. Contact Kate Svrcek (katesvrcek@hotmail.com).

Are you interested in one of these areas of membership? Join us! Contact Suzanne Lowe (Suzanne.campbell.lowe@gmail.com).

The Arts at First Parish

Fostering Community through the Arts



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

Upcoming Events

Day	Date	Time	Event
Saturday	December 5	1:30 - 4:30 p.m.	Children's Craft Workshop
Saturday	December 12	9:00 a.m.	First Parish Photography Club
Saturday	December 12	3:00 p.m.	WPA Holiday Concert featuring Eric Huenneke, organ
Sunday	December 13	1:30 p.m.	Folk Tales on Stage
Friday	December 18	7:30 p.m.	Rise Up Caroling

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

New Arts Events Resource List

Call for People with Special Skills

The number of arts events at First Parish is growing. To help people coordinate their event, we are compiling a resource list of people with special skills who may be able to assist with planning music, plays, art exhibits, poetry readings and more. If you have a skill such as producing, directing, writing (press releases, articles, designing brochures or posters, photography, or another skill) and would like to help support arts events at First Parish, please contact Susan Page (srpage13@gmail.com) or Beth Norton (bnorton@firstparish.org). We will add your name to the list and be happy to answer your questions. *Thank you for supporting the arts at First Parish!*



Partner Congregation Committee

Transylvania Movie

Beneath the Surface

Saturday, January 9, at 7:00 p.m.

The creative color documentary film "Beneath the Surface" is the moving story of the 1989 flooding of our partner minister József Szombatfalvi's home village by the communists and how the remaining former inhabitants, now sprawled across different countries and



social classes, meet annually by the side of the lake in an attempt to pass on their special values to the younger generations. Please join us for desserts, popcorn, the movie and a discussion period, for a synopsis, visit <http://www.flandersimage.com/browse-titles/detail/beneath-the-surface>; and for a trailer visit <https://vimeo.com/105786921>.

József's Retirement

József and Anna have moved into their new retirement home and send their love, best wishes and gratitude for the gifts from our congregation. Their congregation is in the middle of the search process for a new minister, and hope to have someone installed before Christmas.

Student Scholarships

Many thanks to all those who have so generously donated scholarships for the deserving students in the Concord-Keresztúr Scholarship Program. This year our scholarships are helping 35 students get quality educations. Donors should expect to hear from their students by early December.

Women's AM/PM Book Group

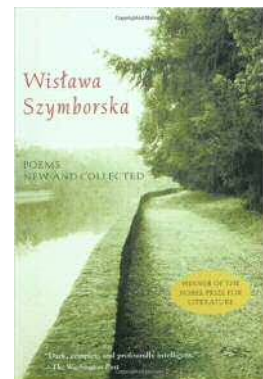
Monday, December 7, 7:30-9:00 p.m.; Brooks Room

Tuesday, December 8, 9:30-11:00 a.m.; Brooks Room

As usual, the Women's Book Group will discuss just one book for November and December. The selection is *Poems, New and Collected*, by Wistawa Szymborska. All women of First Parish are warmly invited to read the book and join a discussion.

The evening/morning sessions will be held in the Brooks Room:

- Monday, December 7, 7:30-9:00 p.m.,
- Tuesday, December 8, 9:30-11:00 a.m.



If you would like to be added to the Women's Book Group email list, please contact Darien Smith at darien@smithquest.com.

Books and Dates for 2015-2016

- Dec. 7/8 (Nov. and Dec.) – *Poems, New and Collected*, Wistawa Szymborska
- Jan. 25/26 – *The Invention of Wings*, Sue Monk Kidd
- Feb. 29/Mar 1 – *Prague Winter: A Personal Story of Remembrance and War, 1937-1948*, Madeleine Albright
- Mar. 28/29 – *Me Before You*, Jojo Moyes
- April 25/26 – *Shakespeare Saved My Life: Ten Years in Solitary with the Bard*, Laura Bates
- May 23/24 – *All the Light We Cannot See: A Novel*, Anthony Doerr



WPA Holiday Artisans Fair Thank You for Another Great Fair!

The Women's Parish Association extends heartfelt thanks to all the wonderful volunteers and attendees who helped make this year's Holiday Artisans Fair another great success. This was a fantastic communal effort executed with great skill and joyful spirit on everyone's part. Our fair is a favorite among the artists, artisans and customers. Great work all around! The proceeds will be used to support WPA and provide programs, general support for First Parish facilities and program needs, and designated local and international charities. For more on the WPA, contact Dian Pekin at pekindc@comcast.net.

Americans for Economic Fairness Thank You

The *Americans for Economic Fairness* group was started here at First Parish to raise awareness and take actions on the UUA study action issue *Escalating Inequality*. In our efforts to support fairness in taxes, we recently collected signatures on a petition for a state constitutional amendment that would establish an additional 4% income tax on those whose incomes are greater than \$1,000,000 annually.



Thank you very much to the 167 people who signed the petition and to Wendy Holt and Nancy Cronin who put in extra effort to collect additional signatures outside of First Parish.

You may all be interested to know that in a sample of 20 peer OECD countries, the United States today has the lowest social mobility, the greatest economic inequality, and, the most poverty. We have much work to do. People can follow our group on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/EconomicFairness/>, or email fredvandeu@gmail.com to get on our mailing list.

Sunday Bouillon Volunteers Needed



It is that time of year again. We are thinking that we might begin making bouillon January 3, the first Sunday in January, as we did last year. Remember how delicious the bouillon was on a cold winter Sunday? And the smell, drifting upstairs?

If this is going to happen, we need volunteers. Can you help one Sunday a month by buying, preparing, serving, and/or cleaning up? I will be there most Sundays to help clean up. If you would like, you could team up with a friend: One does the

buying and preparation, both serve (and schmooze with parishioners enjoying the bouillon), and the other cleans up. Or any other way you'd like.

Please email Kel Keleher at kel@rkeleher.com or call him at 978-944-2734 if you are interested. Thanks!

Moms' Night Out

Holiday Cookie Exchange

Friday, December 11, 2015, 7:30 p.m.

The First Parish Moms' Night Out (MNO) group is hosting its annual Holiday Cookie Exchange on Friday, December 11 at 7:30 p.m. at the church. Please bring a dozen or more cookies (the amount you want to exchange), a label listing your cookies' ingredients, and a snack or drink to share. Join other FP moms to celebrate this special time of year and take home some wonderful treats. Moms' Night Out was created by FP moms as a way to get together from time to time to socialize, build a support network, and share resources and ideas about raising kids in today's world. All FP moms are welcome. For details on this and other upcoming MNO gatherings, please join the MNO listserv by sending an email to Melissa Chaffee at mamacha.tea@gmail.com.



Sound Operator and Ushers Needed

Third Sunday of the Month



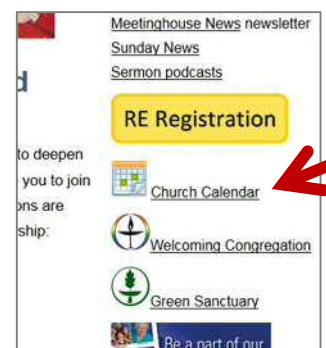
Want to make sure Howard's sermons can be heard around the world? Then volunteer to be the sound engineer for the third Sunday service each month. Easy-peasy training provided. And if you're friendly and helpful, we want you as an usher on the third Sunday of each month. Become part of one of the vital church teams serving your fellow parishioners. To get started, drop volunteer head usher Maile Hulihan a line at mailehulihan@earthlink.net.

Events-at-a-Glance

Please note: with the January issue of the *Meeting House News*, we are discontinuing the following additional listing of what is on the First Parish website available 24/7.

To access the online calendar, on the First Parish homepage, click on the Church Calendar link on the far right, or you can bookmark the calendar page URL: <http://www.firstparish.org/cms/about-first-parish/hours-directions-services/church-calendar>.

The following information was taken from the online Church Calendar and the events listed reflect the time frame of this Newsletter issue.



Every Week Events	Time	Event Name
Wednesday	9:30 a.m.	Buddhist Group
	4:30 p.m.	Junior Choir
	5:15 p.m.	Chalice Choir
	5:15 p.m.	Gospel Singers
	7:45 p.m.	Adult Choir
Thursday	7:30 p.m.	Buddhist Group

December Unique Events	Time	Event Name
Tuesday, December 1	7:30 a.m.	Finance Committee
	1:30 p.m.	First Tuesday Group
Wednesday, December 2	6:00 p.m.	Arts Council Meeting
	7:00 p.m.	Concord Area Humanists
	7:30 p.m.	Environmental Leadership Meeting
Thursday, December 3	7:30 p.m.	By Your Side Singers
Saturday, December 5	1:30-4:30 p.m.	Children's Crafts Workshop
Sunday, December 6	11:30 a.m.	Sunday Forum
Monday, December 7	7:30 p.m.	Women's Book Group
Tuesday, December 8	9:30 a.m.	Women's Book Group
	9:30 a.m.	WPA Board Meeting
	2:00 p.m.	Shawl Ministry
	4:30 p.m.	SAC Council Meeting
Wednesday, December 9	7:30 p.m.	Americans for Economic Fairness Planning Meeting
Friday, December 11	7:30 p.m.	Mom's Night Out
Saturday, December 12	9:00 a.m.	Photography Club
	3:00 p.m.	WPA Christmas Concert
Sunday, December 13	11:30 a.m.	Forum
	6:00 p.m.	Standing Committee Meeting
Tuesday, December 15	Meeting House News Deadline	
	7:00 p.m.	Membership Committee
	7:00 p.m.	Amnesty International Meeting
	7:30 p.m.	Blue Holiday Vespers
Thursday, December 17	7:30 p.m.	By Your Side Singers
Friday, December 18	7:30 p.m.	Rise Up Caroling
Sunday, December 19	3:00 p.m.	Reception for Barbara Forman's Art Display
Monday, December 21	7:30 p.m.	Denominational Affairs Committee
Thursday, December 24	3:00 p.m. 5:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m. 9:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Services
Friday, December 25	First Parish Closed	

December Unique Events	Time	Event Name
Tuesday, December 29	9 a.m-1:00 p.m.	First Parish Office Open
Wednesday, December 30	9 a.m-1:00 p.m.	First Parish Office Open
Thursday, December 31	9 a.m-1:00 p.m.	First Parish Office Open

January Week One	Time	Event Name
Friday, January 1		First Parish Closed
Tuesday, January 5	7:30 a.m.	Finance Committee
	1:30 p.m.	First Tuesday Group
Wednesday, January 6	6:00 p.m.	Arts Council Meeting
	7:00 p.m.	Concord Area Humanists
	7:30 p.m.	Environmental Leadership Meeting
Thursday, January 7	7:30 p.m.	By Your Side Singers
Saturday, January 9	9:00 a.m.	Photography Club

Reminder, with the January issue of the *Meeting House News*, we are discontinuing the above additional listing of what is on the First Parish website available 24/7.

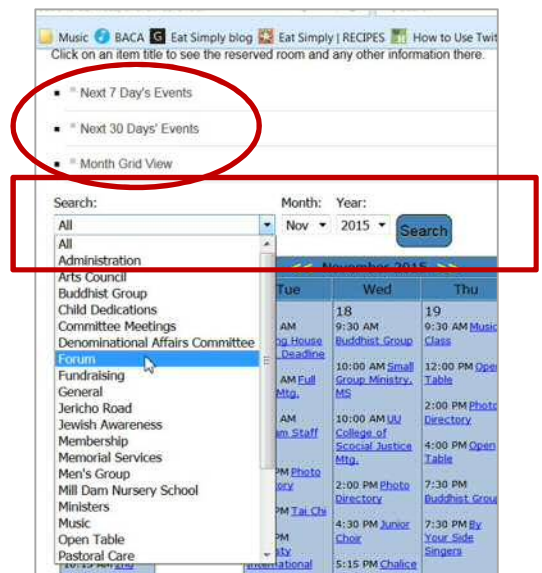
Website Wonder

Are you familiar with “filtering”? It’s a really helpful way to look at only what you want to see, of filtering the unwanted content out, similar to a search. You can filter in multiple ways when viewing the Church calendar online.

You can filter events in these ways:

- Next 7 days or next 30 days
- Event category (see drop down list in screen capture and scroll list for more options)
- Month and/or Year (click downward triangle)

Try using filters to view the online Church calendar and more easily find what you want to see. It takes only five minutes a week to develop your skills.



Editor’s Notes

Next *Meeting House News*: **Deadline: December 15, 2015**

Next publication date: **December 29, 2015**

Any late or incomplete entries or last minute changes create a lot of emails and handoff difficulties. It’s so very helpful to everyone involved in producing the *MHN* when your submission is *thorough, accurate, and on time*. We love you for that and thank you! If you are listing a meeting, please include the day of the week, date, time, and location/room. Please email newsletter submissions, with the word “newsletter” on the subject line, to Wendy Wolfberg at wolfberg@post.harvard.edu.

You are encouraged to *attach* a JPEG picture or image to give a little “zing” to your submission. Guidelines and House Style information are available in the June 2015 MHN, which can be downloaded from the website. Please adhere to recommended word limits (100). We know it’s hard, but you can do it!

First Parish Contacts

Office hours: Tuesday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

The building is closed Mondays. Meetings and events may be scheduled for Monday evenings.

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 (FAP):

<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>

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

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Add us to your address book.



A Helping Hand
Can Change the World



Celebrate!

Holiday and December Events, Programs and Services for 2015

SUNDAY WORSHIP

“Against the darkness winter brings, we bring our light. The candles of our hearts lit by the Advent Star. In darkened places, to guard the longest night.” —Ernest Sommerfeld

Sunday, December 6, 10:00 a.m.: “Jesus’ Imperfect Family,” Rev. Howard N. Dana, First Parish Choir and Preschool Choir of Angels (preschool through first grade). Don’t miss this yearly tradition of joy. Imagine all of the wonder that is sparked by marching our little Angels out to sing their song of hope, *This Little Light of Mine*.

Sunday, December 13, 10:00 a.m.: “Don’t Let the Light Go Out,” Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights. Rev. Howard N. Dana, First Parish Choir.

Sunday, December 20, 10:00 a.m.: “Winter Solstice,” Rev. Howard Dana, Rev. Amy Freedman and First Parish Choir. This Sunday will honor the ancient traditions of the winter solstice, the time of the longest night of the year and the anticipation of the future return of the sun.

Sunday, December 27, 10:00 a.m.: Rev. Aaron Stockwell. Music by the Conchords.

All worship services are held in the First Parish Sanctuary.

WORSHIP: CHRISTMAS EVE

Four Services:

New! 3:00 p.m. Family Service “Carols and a Crèche.” We’ll share the Christmas story by building the nativity together. Congregational carol singing.

5:00 p.m. Family Christmas Eve Service. Nativity tableau with carol singing and music by our Children’s Choirs.

7:00 p.m. Traditional Lessons and Carols with music by the Gospel Choir.

9:00 p.m. Traditional Lessons and Carols with music by the First Parish Choir.

Each service concludes with candle lighting and “Silent Night.”

WORSHIP: BLUE HOLIDAYS VESPERS

“Dark of Winter”

Tuesday, December 15, 7:30 p.m. in the Chapel

For those who are less than joyous this holiday season, come, breathe and gather your thoughts in the quiet beauty of candles, music, and understanding. Rev. Marion Visel, Beth Norton and the By Your Side Singers will offer a holiday alternative, a quiet space to share reflective words of remembrance, solace and comfort. Though the winter holidays are not always merry, this time can be a time of loving kindness and gentle community. All are welcome.

LISTEN AND COMMUNE

Saturday, December 12, 3:00 p.m.

Add sparkle and joy to your holiday season by attending the annual Holiday Concert and Tea on Saturday, December 12, at 3:00 p.m. Eric Huenneke will give a lovely organ concert with commentary on seasonal music in the Sanctuary, followed by a traditional Christmas tea in the Parish Hall and Parlor. There is no charge for this event, but reservations are requested for food planning purposes. Contact the front office or Pekindc@comcast.net by December 9 to make reservations. If possible, bring a nicely plated offering of sweets to share. All men, women and youth are warmly invited.

SING

“Rise Up Caroling” is on Friday, December 18, 7:30 p.m. Singers of all ages, please bring voices, instruments and cookies to share. Carol lyrics and sheet music for instrumentalists are provided.

REMEMBER

The Holiday Loss Wreath will be present in the Sanctuary during the month of December; you may want to add a ribbon in honor of someone you love who has died.

HONOR

Come to the poinsettia table at coffee hour if you wish to donate a plant in memory of a loved one. Their name and yours will be included in a memorial listing in the December 20 order of service, and the poinsettias will decorate the Sanctuary throughout the holidays. To donate, visit the poinsettia table at coffee hour following the December 6 and 13 services; contact Linda Reynolds at 978-371-0562 or LSmithReynolds@aol.com; or leave a note and donation (suggested amount \$20) in the office before December 15.

SHARE

Deliveries of Christmas poinsettias will take place on Saturday, December 26, at 10:00 a.m. Bring good cheer to a parish member and perhaps meet someone for the first time. Contact Caitlin Selle at selle.caitlin5@gmail.com or 978-371-3915, or visit the poinsettia table to sign up to deliver flowers or if you know someone who would appreciate a flower delivery.

CREATE

On Saturday, December 5, from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m., First Parish children are invited to spend the afternoon at the church, making great gifts for the holidays. Adult and teen “elves” are invited to share in the fun. Cost is \$15 per child, maximum \$45 for a family. Snacks and drinks provided. To volunteer, sign up at coffee hour or contact Patty Popov by phone, 978-369-1990, or email, ppopov@wesleyan.edu. Your Holiday Head Elves are Jan Goddard-Taylor, Marilyn Lowitt, Dave Elwood, Patty Popov, Jeannie Williams and Kristin Moore.

LAUGH

The First Parish 8th Grade Players are presenting their original show *Folktales on Stage*. Directed by Katherine Akerley, this ensemble will bring to life the following classic stories: “Abiyoyo,” “Under the Cherry Blossom Tree” and “Anansi.” There will be two performances in the Parish Hall on Sunday, December 13, 10:15 a.m. for RE classes and at 1:30 p.m. for family and friends. Lunch and refreshments will be available thanks to the 6th and 7th Grade Neighboring Activists. All ages are welcome.

DELIGHT IN

Our Choir of Angels (preschool through first grade) will share their song of hope on Sunday, December 6. Don't miss this yearly tradition of joy. Imagine all of the wonder that is sparked by marching our little angels out to sing their song of

hope, *This Little Light of Mine*. This year, our angels will be led in song by Sue Beck and Chris Randall. Thanks to Dawn Van Patten for coordinating this lovely tradition.

GATHER

Christmas Caroling Sunday, December 20, 1:00 p.m. This is what the Christmas season is all about! Children and adults are invited to bring the gift of musical cheer to our parishioners and others who can't get out this season. We will meet at the church at 1:00 p.m., and carpool to area nursing homes to sing. Afterward, we'll head back to First Parish to enjoy cookies and hot chocolate together. All are welcome! Please feel free to bring cookies to share! For more information, please contact Lora Venesy at 978-254-5433 or venesy@comcast.net.

LISTEN

Holiday bells are ringing! Please join the Lincoln Ringers for their annual Candlelight Concert in the charming sanctuary of First Parish in Lincoln on Tuesday, December 22, at 7:00 p.m. You'll be treated to an evening of Christmas carols and holiday favorites, both sacred and secular. The concert is free, and all ages are welcome!

SERVE

Concord Prison Outreach: Donations for prisoners are due between Sunday, November 29, and Monday, December 7. Please leave them in the First Parish coatroom.
Secret Santa: Purchased gifts can be dropped off during coffee hour on Sundays December 6 and 13. Gifts should be unwrapped but in one gift bag, per Secret Santa.

SHOP

The Good Buy is an online shopping experience developed by the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. Proceeds from the store fund human rights programs around the world. You make a positive difference with each purchase. Visit www.thegoodbuy.com.

INVITE

During the holidays, everyone is asked to remember the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee and their grassroots partners around the world. Guest at Your Table boxes sit on your dining room table during the holiday season, collecting spare change and dollars. If you didn't get a box in worship on November 22, pick up your box from the RE Office after Thanksgiving.