

Meeting House News

February 2016



Photo by Susan Page

Heartfelt 
THANKS
 TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

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Photo by Pamela Dritt (looking down on the church stairwell)

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



Do you send submissions?
Please see new information under
Editor's Notes. Thank you!

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Sundays at First Parish

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, February 7 – “Got Wisdom?”

Rev. Marion Visel
First Parish Choir

Sunday, February 14 – “Ours to Follow: Samuel Gridley Howe”

Rev. Howard Dana
Contemporary Vocal Ensemble

Sunday, February 21 – “A Place for Ben – Special Needs Children in Church”

Rev. Howard Dana
First Parish Choir

Sunday, February 28 – Coming of Age Service (90 minutes)

Bethany Russell-Lowe and Coming of Age participants
Youth Musicians and Gospel Choir

Sunday, March 6 – “A Parade of Gifts: Celebration Sunday”

Rev. Howard Dana and Rev. Amy Freedman
Combined First Parish Choirs



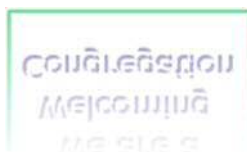
Welcoming Newcomers



Please enjoy this important reflection about welcoming newcomers, highlighted at the end of this month's newsletter.

Excerpt:

When I was first exposed to the idea of greeting complete strangers . . . it did not jibe with my . . . sensibilities. . . . Recently, Howard gave a sermon that was very much to the point: that for the future health of First Parish we must welcome newcomers rather than repel them . . .



Sunday Forums

After Worship, at 11:30 a.m., Sanctuary



February 7—Standing Committee, open congregational conversations in the Emerson Room. Come and participate!

February 14—Csilla Tambor on "Language Skills." Csilla is from English-at-Large. They provide free English language and cultural instruction to refugee and immigrant adults, which is sorely needed.

February 21—Lou Fackert on "Addiction: the Disease of Shame." Lou is a longtime parishioner and Director of Corporate Training at Bay Cove Social Services in Boston. Her topic will include the soaring cases of opioid addiction and overdoses.

February 28—Evan Seitz on "Climate Justice Work." Evan is a UU climate activist based at the Bedford UU Church, in which he grew up. He lives in a co-op in Somerville, is an avid cyclist and is active in the fossil fuel divestment movement.

March 6—Dr. Mike Hecht, "Paving the Human Path to Mars," canceled January 10 due to illness is rescheduled. Many obstacles remain, but work is progressing rapidly on new solutions and technologies. Dr. Hecht will bring us up-to-date and challenge our expectations.

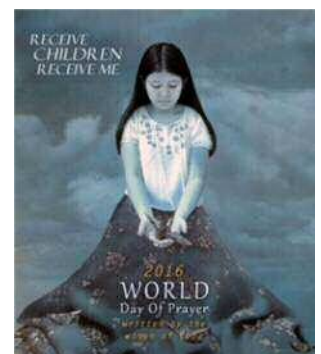
For more on Dr. Hecht, visit <http://phoenix.lpl.arizona.edu/hechtMichael.php>. For more information, contact the chair, Pat Everett, at pne@aol.com or 978-369-1589.

World Day of Prayer Service

Friday, March 4, 11:00 a.m., at Trinity Episcopal Church, Concord

Concord Area/Cuban Memorabilia

Women, men and children in more than 170 countries and regions will celebrate World Day of Prayer on Friday, March 4. This year the WDP committee women of Cuba will remind participants in the service of their responsibilities for the caring of the world's children. The Concord Area Prayer Service will begin at 11:00 a.m. at Trinity Episcopal Church, 81 Elm Street, Concord, followed by a festive luncheon celebrating the people and cultures of Cuba. Reservations are not



required. If you have artwork, decorations or photography from Cuba that you could lend for the event, contact Dian Pekin at Pekindc@comcast.net.

Operations

Fifi Ball, Director of Operations, fball@firstparish.org, or the church office 978-369-9602.

Christmas Eve 2015

What a wonderful Christmas Eve 2015 we had! Thanks to everyone who made it so special. Doug Baker reported the following attendance at Christmas Eve services.

- 3:00 p.m. – 209
- 5:00 p.m.– 520
- 7:00 p.m.– 191
- 9:00 p.m.– 426



Peg Gallo and Tina Storey reported that the total plate collection was \$8,678.26, up \$225 from last year's \$8,453. Special thanks to Alice and Fred Van Deusen for helping sort the cash. These donations are divided and sent to both our Partner Congregation in Transylvania (50 percent, \$4,339.13), and the UU Urban Ministry in Roxbury, Massachusetts (50 percent, \$4,339.13).

Shop Crosby's and Help First Parish

March 6-12 and June 5-11

As part of Crosby's Market's Community Commitment Program, First Parish will earn 5 percent of pretax grocery purchases at Crosby's Market by people who submit a voucher when shopping (while paying at the cash register) during the following two weeks:

- March 6-12, 2016
- June 5-11, 2016

Vouchers will be available on the table outside the church front office and from Peg Gallo. Peg works at First Parish on Tuesdays, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., and Wednesdays, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon. You may also email Peg at pgallo@firstparish.org. *Thank you for supporting First Parish.*

Auction Fundraiser

Saturday, April 30, "Off to the Races"

The Auction Committee is "Off to the Races" for a Kentucky Derby – themed party. The Creative Team is forming now. See the write-up later in this newsletter.

MUUsings

No column this month, but we didn't want you to think we forgot!

Cross-Cultural Choir

Hope Out Loud Community Choir Forming

Sunday, April 10—Performance at 3:00 p.m. with 1:30 p.m. call

Still time to join! Sam Martinborough, irrepressible Director of MssgLnks in Boston, is directing 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. There are two more rehearsals, in February and March. 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 April 10.



Carpools are being arranged from First Parish.

SAVE THE DATES

All rehearsals 10 Putnam Street, Roxbury

- Tuesday, February 23—rehearsal
- Tuesday, March 29—rehearsal (critical)
- Sunday, April 10—performance (3:00 p.m., with 1:30 p.m. call)

If interested, contact Beth Norton, Director of Music, at music@firstparish.org or Gail Carey, Music Ministry Associate, at improvgail@gmail.com (preferred) or at the church office, 978-369-9602.

Contemporary Vocal Ensemble

February 14 – Rehearsals begin for Sunday, March 13

Rehearsals – Sundays, 11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m., Chapel

Commit by the Service – New Singers Welcome!

Come experience the power and joy that comes from shared song. Do you have a passion for singing? Do you love gospel, jazz, folk? Do you enjoy singing but feel unable to make a weekly commitment to a choir? Do you long to share your voice in the music ministry here at First Parish in Concord? If so, the Contemporary Vocal Ensemble may be just what you are seeking. If you have sung with us before, spread the word.

We are now accepting new singers for our March 13 worship service. Weekly rehearsals to prepare for that service begin Sunday, February 14. We will always plan to warm up and run through pieces the morning of the service.

If interested, contact Gail Carey, Music Ministry Associate, at improvgail@gmail.com (preferred) or at the church office 978-369-9602.

Religious Education News

I am grateful for all the people who so generously offer their time, caring and wisdom to our children.

Special Thanks

Many thanks to all the teachers who taught during the second term of Religious Education.



Susan Parish
Rachael Morris
Heather Packard
Beth Modahl-Israel
Katherine Booth
Tim Peacock

Trena Minudri
Kelli Philpott
Phil D'Amico
Leslie Koplow
Paul Benzaquin
Julia Samnotra
John Boynton

Kristin Parlman
Paul Cook
Leslie Pelton
Katherine Akerley
Kate Svrcek
Edye Benedict
Anne Remington

We have a wonderful team of Teaching Assistants: Claire, Olivia, Nuffi, Robert, Hannah, Linnea, Talia S. and Talia A.

Special thanks to those who helped to make the Christmas season even more merry and bright! Sue Beck, Chris Randall, and Dawn Van Patten did a lovely job with our Little Angels. Tricia Haut did an excellent job coordinating our Secret Santa program. Thanks to Lora Venesy for coordinating a group to go caroling after church one Sunday.

A special shout out to the Holiday Craft Elves: Marilyn Lowitt, Jan Goddard-Taylor, Dave Elwood, Patty Popov, Jeanne Williams and Kristin Moore. The Elf Workshop is such a meaningful tradition for all ages. I was so impressed to see the huge team of volunteers who helped children make hand-crafted and thoughtful gifts.

K-6, "Deepening Spiritually" Workshops

Sundays, February 7-21, from 10:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.



This month we will be offering a series of "Deepening Spiritually" workshops. This means that instead of our regular Religious Education classes each Sunday, our kids will explore a theme to grow spiritually. Some amazing First Parish members have stepped forward to share their gifts and ideas with our children.

Themes for Kindergarten through Grade 6 include:

- **Peace**, Sunday, February 7
- **Love**, Sunday, February 14
- **Hope**, Sunday, February 21

Grade 9, Coming of Age Service

Sunday, February 28, from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.

Our Coming of Age service will be the culmination of our ninth grade program. Twelve youth will present their credos, personal statements of belief, to our congregation. This is always a moving rite of passage. We encourage children who are in the fifth grade and older to attend that service. We will have a special program for younger kids that day.

Blessings,

Amy

Rev. Amy Freedman

Minister of Religious Education

Contact at afreedman@firstparish.org or 978-369-9602.

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

February Pastoral Care Lay Minister, Lori Gill-Pazaris

Email: lpazaris@gmail.com

Phone: 978-369-6305

Cell: 978-505-2720

February Meals Delivery:

Marian Stanley

Email: marian.stanley@gmail.com

Phone: 978-369-2008

Pat Kane

Email: cstmcloth@yahoo.com

Phone: 978-369-8418



Small Group Ministry

Call for Facilitators

There has been a strong response to the Small Group Ministry (SGM) offered so far, and facilitators have found the experience to be meaningful and rewarding. People are enthusiastic about growing spiritually and deepening their relationships with each other, but Small Group Ministry can't exist without facilitators!



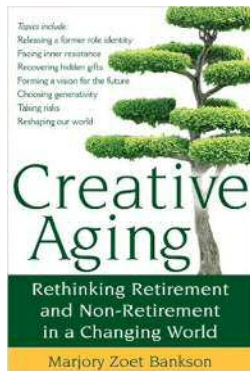
Facilitating a Small Group requires commitment to a regular meeting schedule. A facilitator is responsible for helping to manage group process and clarifying expectations while modeling caring covenantal relationship. Facilitators will be trained and supported by Rev. Marion Visel, Minister for Pastoral Care. She would be happy to talk with you about becoming a SGM facilitator.

Contact Marion at mvisel@firstparish.org or 978/369-9602, x 414.

New Group on Retirement

“Finding Meaning and Purpose in Retirement”—*Forming Now*
Tuesdays, February 9 to May 3, from 10:00 a.m. to Noon, at First Parish

Small Group Ministry provides an opportunity to listen and to share our own experiences and beliefs in committed groups of 8 to 10 members. Participants agree to regular attendance and to guidelines on how the group will be together.



“Finding Meaning & Purpose in Retirement”—6 Sessions

As you anticipate or are searching for a more meaningful retirement, are you wondering who you are and who you want to be when you are no longer defined by your career? Facilitated by Fred Van Deusen, this six-session group explores the spiritual and creative dimensions of retirement and aging using the book *Creative Aging: Rethinking Retirement and Non-Retirement in a Changing World*, by Marjory Zoet Bankson (Skylight Paths Publishing, 2010). The group is limited to 10.

The six sessions dates are 2/9, 2/23, 3/8, intentional break, 4/5, 4/19, and 5/3.

Participants will:

- Read the book noted above (available at Amazon.com or your public library). If you can, please read Chapters 1 and 2 before the first session.
- Attend group sessions.
- Engage in personal reflection, sharing and daily spiritual practices.

You can sign up on the clipboard in the church office, or contact Rev. Marion Visel, mvisel@firstparish.org or 978/369-9602, x414. Limited to 10, so sign up ASAP.

First Parish Rides

Transportation Help

Do you need transportation help to come to First Parish on Sundays, especially during the winter? First Parish offers rides to Sunday worship and other parish events, in addition to rides for medical appointments, etc., on weekdays. With a few days' notice, we can usually fulfill a local request for a ride.

Our drivers would love to help! To request a ride, contact our Rides Coordinator, Suzanne Hogan, at suzanne.hogan@comcast.net or 978-318-9035. Our Back-Up Rides Coordinator is Suzanne Knight, at suzanneknight@comcast.net or 978/369-9636.



Social Action Community

Faith into Action

No column this month, but we didn't want you to think we forgot!

Amnesty International

Tuesday, February 16, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m., Greeley Room

The advocacy of Group 15 focuses on regional, national, and global issues:

- Regionally, how can we get proposed state legislation on solitary confinement to a vote this session?
- Nationally, the mood is shifting on the death penalty. What are our most effective targets for action?
- Internationally, we continue our letter-writing campaigns against violence toward women, injustice in a variety of countries, and support for our two Azerbaijani human rights defenders.



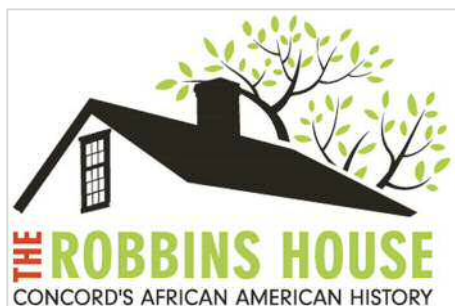
AI Group 15 regular meeting

Interested? Group 15 meets monthly on the third Tuesday from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. Contact Kathy Taylor at Kly.taylor@gmail.com or 781-275-0791.

Black Lives Matter

Join the Conversation

Sunday, February 28, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., Parish Hall



Please join us for a Robbins House fundraising event to view the PBS documentary *Slavery by Another Name*. Historian Robert Gross will make introductory remarks. John Hannigan, Scholar in Residence at the historic Robbins House will introduce new research on the African American experience in Concord. Robbins House Director, Elon Cook, will also join our conversation.

A \$10 suggested donation for the event will support future programming. RSVP to Bethany Russell-Lowe, Blowe@firstparish.org or 978-369-9602, x450. Refreshments will be served.

Climate Solutions

“Getting to Net Zero: Learning from Cambridge”

Tuesday, February 2, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., Parish Hall

The Climate Solutions speaker series will continue with a speaking event on Net Zero—what it is, why it is a solution to climate change, why it is an urgent course to take now, and what action other communities are taking to implement it. Featured speakers are Henrietta Davis, former Mayor of Cambridge, and Quinton Zondervan, president of Green Cambridge.

For more information, visit <http://www.concordcan.org/whats happening.html> or contact Bob Andrews at bob.andrews3@verizon.net or 978-369-2876.

Funderburg Scholars

Fundraising Dinner

Saturday, February 6, 6:30 p.m., Parish Hall

Be sure to join us on Saturday, February 6, for the Funderburg Scholars fundraising dinner at church. Help Roxbury youth attend and graduate from college while you enjoy a delicious meal with great company! These engaging students will tell stories about their college experiences. No fixed “price”—donate what feels right to you at the dinner.

Reserve your place at dinner by calling Loretta Ho Sherblom’s cell at 508-935-6750 or by email at Loretta@LHSBenefits.com. Join us for wine and cheese at 6:30 p.m., dinner by Sven Olson at 7:15 p.m.



Growing Up Trans

Film and Panel Discussion

Tuesday, February 23, from 6:45 to 9:00 p.m., Parish Hall

The Diversity Committee will show the documentary “Growing Up Trans,” which takes viewers on an intimate and eye-opening journey inside the struggles and choices facing transgender kids and their families. This will be followed by a question and answer period with several panelists who have direct experience with this topic. We’ll gather at 6:45 p.m. for socializing and refreshments, and the film will start promptly at 7:00 p.m.



More information about our panelists will be sent out via an FPAnnounce email. Contact Sara Ballard at sara@sb.org or 978-371-0723 with any questions.

Partner Church—A New Minister

Coming Soon—Watch for More Information

The Keresztúr congregation has voted favorably for the ministerial candidate proposed by their governing board. However, the Hungarian Unitarian denominational bylaws require that all votes for new ministers be ratified by its overall governing body in Kolozsvár (Cluj) before the results are official. Once the results are official, we will post them, and information about the new minister, to the FP Announce email list and to our partnership Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/ConcordKeresztur>).

Partner Congregation Committee

“Beneath the Surface” DVDs

The Partner Congregation Committee recently showed the award-winning film “Beneath The Surface,” about the intentional flooding by the Communists of the home village of József Szombatfalvi, the former minister of our partner church in Transylvania.

We are able to get DVDs of the film to distribute for \$15 each. Please contact Rodger Matlage at matlage@mac.com or 781-259-9639 if you’d like to order a copy.

Reclaiming Democracy

Wednesday, March 2, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m., Parish Hall

Jeffrey Clements: “Reclaiming Democracy from Big Money and Global Corporations”

We have to reduce the influence of money in our politics, so that a handful of families and hidden interests can’t bankroll our elections.



Changes in our political process ... will only happen when the American people demand it. It will depend on you.

—President Barack Obama; January 12, 2016

Concord's own Jeffrey Clements is an author, lawyer and prominent national figure in the efforts to overturn the Citizens United Supreme Court decision. We have the great opportunity and honor to hear him speak about this topic and new efforts to engage communities around the country to stop corporations and the very rich from taking over our democracy. Please come.

Sponsored by Americans for Economic Fairness, Concord Area Humanists and the First Parish Social Action Community. Contact: Fred Van Deusen at fredvandeu@gmail.com, or 978-369-0435.

Reproductive Justice

Does this sound like you? "We envision a world where all genders work to optimize women's quality of life by removing social, economic, political and institutional barriers, to promote choices, access and agency."

This new vision statement was created by participants at the recent Reproductive Justice brainstorming retreat organized by Lora Venesy and facilitated by Rebecca Curzon. Interested in enacting this vision? To join our mailing list, contact Lora Venesy, venesy@comcast.net or the church office 978-369-9602.

Our next event will be hosting Lunafest, a not-to-be-missed traveling film festival of award-winning short films by, for and about women, which raises money for local nonprofits and the Breast Cancer Fund. A planning meeting will be held soon; stay tuned for details.



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**

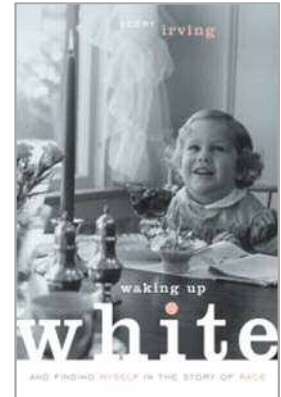


The UU Urban Ministry (UUUM) is calling all Unitarian Universalist teens to join with the youth in the Roxbury Youth Program for "Environmental Justice in the City," a year of learning, sharing and justice making as we explore the intersections of environmental and racial injustice. This is facilitated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

Waking Up White Reading Group

Ongoing

This fall, a small group of members concerned with racial justice issues has been reading Debby Irving's *Waking Up White*. Started 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, contact Bethany Russell-Lowe at Blowe@firstparish.org or 978-369-9602.



Standing Committee News

Next regular meeting: Sunday, February 7, 1:00 p.m.
Open Conversations: Sunday, February 7, 11:30 a.m., Emerson Room
Tuesday, February 9, 7:00 p.m., Parlor

Fiscal Year 2017 Budget Priorities

At our January 10, 2016, meeting, the Standing Committee discussed budget priorities for Fiscal Year 2017 (7/1/2016 to 6/30/2017) and provided guidance to Rev. Howard Dana and Director of Operations Fifi Ball as they plan for the annual pledge campaign and the FY17 budget.

There is not a lot of room for expansion. Among the most important spending priorities are providing pay raises for First Parish staff and setting aside funding for building maintenance and capital improvements. Standing Committee members also considered a move away from fee-based religious education.

On the revenue side, members discussed the importance of strengthening our pledge base. First Parish is very reliant on a small number of large donors. We would be financially healthier if some of our low- and middle-tier donors increased their pledges. It is not too early to start thinking about the importance of First Parish in your life and consider how much you can pledge for next year!

Stairway to Terrace

So what's up with those orange cones on the stairway leading down from the Sanctuary to the terrace doors? Intended to guide parishioners to the side railings, these cones are a temporary effort to make the stairway safer. First Parish staff members, supported by the Facilities Advisory and Research Group (FARG), a congregational group formed to assist sexton Doug Baker, are researching additional options.

Upcoming Events

Looking for something to do during these cold winter months? There are lots of fun and important activities happening at First Parish.

- **Congregational Conversations**—the Standing Committee will host open congregational conversations on:
 - Sunday, February 7, at 11:30 a.m., Emerson Room
 - Tuesday, February 9, at 7:00 p.m., Parlor
- **Book discussions, *Waking Up White***—check these out; organized by the First Parish Race Conversations group. For further information, contact Bethany Russell-Lowe at blowe@firstparish.org or 978-369-9602.
- **Annual Pledge Campaign**—reach out to the campaign project manager, Rebecca Curzon, at rebeccacurzon@comcast.net or call the office to volunteer.
- **April 30 Auction**— if you'd like to help, please contact the auction chair, Jennifer Izzo, at jbizzo@hotmail.com or call the office.



We Want to Hear from You

Standing Committee members are always eager to talk with First Parishioners. Please reach out to any of us—at coffee hour, at an event, by phone, or by email—to discuss your First Parish experiences. If you have an account on the First Parish website, you can go to the Standing Committee web page and view our meeting minutes, contact information, meeting schedule, governance policies and more: <http://www.firstparish.org/cms/committees/standing-committee>.

Mark Russell Prior, chair, Standing Committee
mark.russell.prior@comcast.net or 978-369-4901

Denominational Affairs Committee

Monday, February 15, 7:30 p.m., Brooks Room



You are invited to attend a Denominational Affairs Committee (DAC) meeting to discover, explore, or share your concerns about issues being addressed within our greater denomination. Meetings are held the third Monday of each month. Learn about what is happening to reduce the problem of escalating inequality in our nation. Provide your opinion about the changes being discussed in the structure of the UUA. See Alice Van Deusen's article below about the UUA General Assembly. Join us!

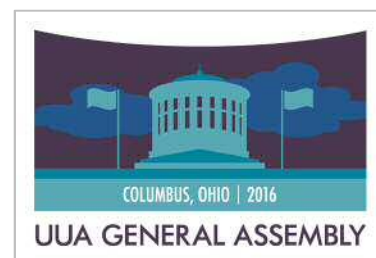
For more information, please contact Paula Vandever at VandeverP@aol.com, or 978-369-9268.

General Assembly 2016

“Heart Land: Where Faiths Connect”

June 22-26 in Columbus, Ohio

Would you like to attend General Assembly 2016? This year the meeting will be in Columbus, Ohio (road trip!) is June 22-26. The theme is *Heart Land: Where Faiths Connect*.



This is a wonderful opportunity to learn more about the larger denomination and connect with UUs from across the country. Any member of the congregation can be a delegate. No prior experience necessary. Registration will begin on March 1, so now is the time to begin planning. Watch for details at the Denominational Affairs table at coffee hour. For further information, please contact Alice Van Deusen, at alicevandeusen@gmail.com or at the coffee hour table.



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.

Upcoming Events

Day	Date	Time	Event
Wednesday	February 3	6:00 p.m.	Arts Council meeting (all welcome)
Saturday	February 13	9:00 a.m.	Photography Club
Wednesday	February 17	11:30 a.m.	WPA Luncheon: Dramatic Portrayal of Hedy Lamarr
Tuesday	February 23	7:00 p.m.	Diversity Committee film: “Growing Up Trans”
Friday	February 26	7:30 p.m.	Rise Up Singing
Sunday	February 28	3:00 p.m.	Film: “Slavery by Another Name”

Purpose

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, at srpage10@verizon.net or 978-264-4271.

Call for People with Special Skills

New Arts Events Resource List



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 events, 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, etc.) and would like to help support arts events at First Parish, please contact Susan Page at srpage13@gmail.com or 978-264-4271, or Beth Norton at bnorton@firstparish.org or 978-369-9602. We will add your name to the list and be happy to answer your questions.

For more information on these events, check this *Meeting House News*, FP Announce, and the *Sunday News*. *Thank you for supporting the arts at First Parish.*

Women's Section

It was suggested that we bring back the Women's Section used in the newsletter in prior years. Below are submissions related to women's issues.



Moms' Night Out

The Moms' Night Out (MNO) group at First Parish was created by moms as a way to socialize, build a support network, and share resources and ideas about raising kids in today's world. All FP moms are welcome! Any mom can organize an event. If you have an idea and would like to host an event, contact Jeanne Williams, courteje@bc.edu.

For details on upcoming MNO gatherings, please join the MNO listserv by sending an email to valvallancourt@gmail.com.

MNO Game Night

Friday, February 5, 7:30 p.m., at the home of one of our members

We'll end the week together with a fun and relaxing evening of games, food and drinks. Feel free to bring your favorite game, snack, beverage or just yourself. Sponsored by the First Parish Moms' Night Out (MNO) group. RSVP to Leanne Baxter, Leanne_gauthier@yahoo.com or 978-263-1990.

MNO Paint and Sip Night

Friday, March 4, 7:00 p.m., Parish Hall

Emily Piper, owner of Maker Farm in Westford, will help us create our own Spring-themed canvas masterpiece in easy-to-follow steps—no experience needed. Please

bring a snack or drink to share. Cost: \$30 at the door. Sponsored by the First Parish Moms' Night Out (MNO) group. RSVP is required to Jeanne Williams, courteje@bc.edu or 978-578-7515.

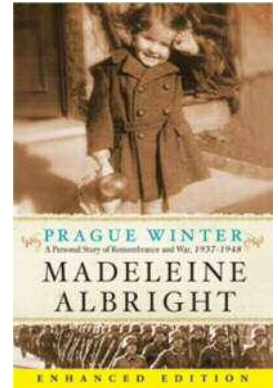
Women's AM/PM Book Group

Monday, February 29, from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.; Brooks Room

Tuesday, March 1, from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m.; Brooks Room

The February selection for the Women's AM/PM Book Group is *Prague Winter: A Personal Story of Remembrance and War, 1937-1948*, by Madeleine Albright. All women of First Parish are warmly invited to read the book and join a discussion.

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 2016

- February 29/March 1 – *Prague Winter: A Personal Story of Remembrance and War, 1937-1948*, Madeleine Albright
- March 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

Reproductive Justice

Does this sound like you? “We envision a world where all genders work to optimize women’s quality of life by removing social, economic, political and institutional barriers, to promote choices, access and agency.”

Please see the complete submission elsewhere under SAC in this newsletter.

Women's Retreat “At Home”

Friday, February 26, Evening; and Saturday, February 27, at First Parish
Final Call for Registration



“She Changes Everything She Touches and Everything She Touches Changes”

While the “Away” retreats have come and gone, there is still time to register for the “At Home” Retreat being held February 26 and 27, beginning Friday evening and continuing Saturday morning and afternoon.

The theme is “She Changes Everything She Touches . . . Join with other women of First Parish as we get to know

each other, relax, have fun, and explore what these words mean to us and how we manifest and incorporate change into our lives.

More information and forms are available to download at www.firstparish.org/forms, or to pick up in the church office, or at coffee hour on January 31. Contact Darien Smith with any questions at darien@smithquest.com.

WPA Luncheon—Hedy Lamarr **February 17, 11:30 a.m., Parish Hall**



A fantastic program has been planned for this month's Women's Parish Association Luncheon, to which all women and men are warmly invited.

Actor/history interpreter Judith Kalora will portray the exquisitely beautiful and fascinating film star and inventor Hedy Lamarr, who was devoted to helping the Allies defeat the Nazis in WW II. Don't miss this entertaining and informative event.

Social time: 11:30 a.m., Lunch: 12:00 p.m., followed by the program. Luncheon cost: \$10. To make reservations and to communicate food requirements, by February 14 contact Dian Pekin at Pekindc@comcast.net (preferred) or church office 978-369-9602.

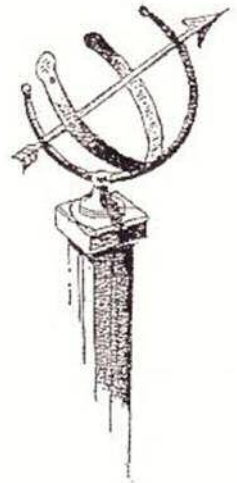
WPA New Horizons

2016 is in full swing and the Women's Parish Association (WPA) is busy with new programs to bring people together to enrich our lives and the lives of others. Our luncheons with guest speakers continue, and the next Friday Night with Friends on February 5 features a light supper with music, a talk about the history of lighting and a simple candle decorating project.

A warm invitation is extended to all women of First Parish to become members of the WPA. Just sign the red membership book—it's that easy! Voluntary contributions are greatly appreciated. All members and friends of First Parish are welcome to our events.

For more information, do stop by the WPA table at coffee hour to see what is new and to sign up for programs. The WPA board joins me in a warm welcome to WPA 2016!

Lois Whitney
WPA Membership



Concord Area Humanists

Stephanie Keep Speaks on Evolution Misconceptions
Wednesday, February 3, 7:00 p.m., Parish Hall

Our meetings bring outside speakers to share interesting Humanistic topics. We socialize and enjoy refreshments, then continue with the presentation, which is followed by vigorous discussion. Refreshments again follow, with socializing until 9:00 p.m., when all are invited to our open Steering Committee meeting.



Wednesday, February 3 Stephanie Keep will speak on "Evolution Misconceptions That Keep the Waters Muddied."

For more on our talks, visit www.ConcordAreaHumanists.org and click on "Events." Contact Pat Everett, at pne@ao.com or 978-369-1589.

Friday Night with Friends

Customized Candle Decorating
Friday, February 5, from 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.
Reserve a spot by February 2

Join other First Parish folks for a light supper, socializing and learning to decorate candles. Richard Fortier will entertain us on his guitar during the meal, and Barbara Forman will give an introductory talk about the history of lighting, followed by a fun workshop. No prior experience is necessary. Hands-on advice and all necessary supplies will be available, and you can bring your creations home. Cost: \$12 including meal and supplies



For reservations and food requirements, contact Dian Pekin at Pekindc@Comcast.net or the church office at 978-369-9602.

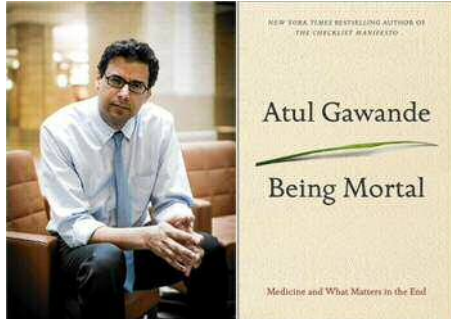
Jewish Awareness Affinity Group

Friday, February 19, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., Brooks Room

Join us when Mel and Laura Bernstein will lead us with the following questions about the state of anti-Semitism in Europe today:

- Do Jews feel safe in France? If not, why not?
- Are many Jews departing France and its neighbors for a new life in Israel—what are the trends and what do they mean?
- What are European leaders doing about the latest developments?

Come share snacks, join the discussion, and relate it to anything that moves you. All are welcome. For more information, contact Dana Snyder-Grant at danasg@newview.org or 978-266-9409.



First Tuesday Group (65+)

February 2, from 1:30 to 3:00 pm, in the Parlor

In this groundbreaking work, Dr. Atul Gawande, a surgeon at Brigham and Women's Hospital and staff writer for the *New Yorker*, explores with compassion, humor and common sense the modern experience of *Being Mortal*.

Led by Margie King Saphier, the group will explore Dr. Gawande's two vital questions for all ages:

- At this time in your life, what makes life worth living?
- When you are old and frail, what do you want to be able to do or to have to make life meaningful?

Even if you haven't finished the book, please feel free to attend. For more information, contact Virginia Taylor, virginiarosstaylor@verizon.net or 978-263-9777.

Auction—Save the Date!

Saturday, April 30, “Off to the Races”

Meeting: Wednesday, February 10, at 7:00 p.m.



The Auction Committee is “Off to the Races” for a Kentucky Derby-themed party. The Creative Team is forming now. This is your chance to join an energetic group of people planning a super fun event!



To learn more about opportunities to get involved, look for the Auction Committee table at coffee hour.

Come to the next meeting on Wednesday, February 10, at 7:00 p.m. and/or contact Jen Izzo at jbizzo@hotmail.com or 617-869-5563.



Website Wonder

Are you using your five minutes a week to teach yourself one little thing about using the computer or browsing websites more easily?



I was surprised to talk with someone recently who was unable to copy and paste while using a computer. This is like not being able to walk.

Think you know the basics? Check yourself [here](#) and if not, review! A little every week adds up to Super UU.!

New UUA Website

Have you seen the new UUA website? Wow! Nice layout and graphics, fast and secure. Check it out: <http://www.uua.org/>. Remember to let your eyes roam the perimeter of the page to learn what's available.

Editor's Notes

Next *Meeting House News*: **Deadline: February 16, 2016**

Next publication date: **March 1, 2016**

Please include **MHN - Title of your event** in the SUBJECT line of your email.

Submission Style Guidelines

The First Parish Style Guidelines have been updated and we ask your help in reducing the rework of the over 100 monthly submissions received collectively for the *Meeting House News*, *Sunday News* and *FP Announce*.

You must include ALL of the following information:

- Event title, day of the week, month (no "th" or "rd"), date, time (range), room
- Description, including sponsoring committee/organization
- Contact: name, email, phone



Maximum 100 word count (double check), no formatting or abbreviations, include a picture if possible, and be sure to spell-check. We go with what you send us.

Phase-In and Important

It is okay to phase in these changes. We do not want to ask too much, and we can continue to help. What is really important, though, is that you send the submission only after it is *complete* and content is *final*, and you have double-checked the word count and spelling. Most submissions forget to include the room. This is the only check we use to remind you to make or cancel a room reservation. These are important.

Final and Complete

The number of incomplete submissions has gotten a bit out of control. To help with the *Meeting House Newsletter*, going forward, we ask you to send only *final* and *complete* submissions. Incomplete submissions will be returned and not included until complete. Please plan ahead, especially if your submission needs input from others.

First Parish style guidelines are available on the website or upon request from the Editor. Please email newsletter submissions to Wendy Wolfberg at wolfberg@post.harvard.edu. Please enter "MHN and your event title" in the Subject line.

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: FPCConcord@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.

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Add us to your address book.

Heartfelt 
THANKS
TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

Welcoming Newcomers

When I was first exposed to the idea of greeting complete strangers at a predetermined time in a service, in a UU congregation in California, it did not jibe with my English and New England sensibilities. I have now become used to it, even in Concord, and have come to recognize its merit. Recently, Howard gave a sermon that was very much to the point: that for the future health of First Parish we must welcome newcomers rather than repel them.

It reminded me of a trip to England many years ago, when my then wife and I visited the UU Church in Hampstead, London. We had sent a letter to the minister saying we would be coming. At the coffee hour all the “friendly congregants” were standing in circles talking with each other with no way for us to enter the conversations even so the minister. We might have gone back another Sunday, but we didn’t. We had been well and truly repelled! That was a town in which I had attended elementary and high school for a number of years.

On the day Howard gave that sermon, I was ushering. During the sermon I sat down next to a youngish-looking couple near the back. That is where newcomers tend to sit, so they can bail out quickly if they become so inclined. I did not recognize them, so during the “Greeting” I took the risk of asking them if they had been coming for a long time. I soon learned they had only been coming for a few weeks and they had not yet been to a coffee hour. I invited them to come down to have some coffee and then look for me at my customary table advertising the Sunday Morning Forum and Concord Area Humanists. I would like to introduce them to some things in which they might be interested.

They did come and we had a nice chat. They asked me how they could become members of the First Parish. Kate Crosby was standing right by us in her role as member of the Standing Committee listening and talking with parishioners, so I introduced them saying that Kate was the person they should talk with. They had a long discussion with her. I suspect they are now well on their way to becoming members, if not already so.

This is a reminder that at any service or coffee hour we should keep our eyes open for those who might be braving a strange congregation and wondering whether they belong. If you ask somebody if they have been coming for a long time, and it turns out they have been coming for much longer than you, then that is something to laugh about, and not be embarrassed. It can be a good conversation opener!

Patrick Everett

