



## *What's Happening at First Parish?*

# MEETING HOUSE NEWS

**DECEMBER 2017**



*Photo by Lois Suarez*



### **IMPORTANT**

*A Year for  
Reflection and  
Visioning*

*A New Practice, Once Every Five Years*

***Read more on Pages 6 and 16. Handout  
at end of Newsletter.***

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*Photo by Susan Page*

## **NEXT MEETING HOUSE NEWS**

**DEADLINE: DECEMBER 12, 2017**

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**Snow Emergencies**—See Fifi's  
“Operations” column on Page 7  
for details.

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## Sundays at First Parish

All Sunday Worship Services are held at 10:00 a.m. unless otherwise noted.

### Worship-at-a-Glance

#### **Sunday, December 3 – “Christmas in the Western World”**

By William Grant Still

First Parish Choir & Festival Chamber Orchestra

#### **Sunday, December 10 – “Love’s Incarnation”**

Rev. Howard N. Dana

Contemporary Vocal Ensemble

#### **Sunday, December 17 – “Light One Candle—Hanukkah”**

Rev. Howard N. Dana

First Parish Choir

#### **Sunday, December 24 – “A Time of Wonder and Delight”**

Rev. Amy Freedman and Rev. Howard N. Dana

#### **Sunday, December 31 – “How High Is This Mountain?”**

Rev. Jo VonRue

Nancy Ackerman, clarinet; Eric Huenneke, organ/piano

#### **Sunday, January 7 – “Threshold: A Place In Between”**

Rev. Marion Visel

The Conchords

### Ushers and Sound Team

#### **Come Join the Ushers and Sound Team**

Are you friendly? Helpful? Come join us on Sundays. It's an easy, once-a-month commitment to welcome fellow parishioners, hand out an order of service, and pass the collection plate. We're seeking ushers/greeters and sound operators for the third and fourth Sundays, and the occasional fifth Sunday (sound training provided). It's a flexible commitment, as ushers switch among themselves to fit the job into their lives. It's a great way to learn faces and make friends!

Interested? Contact volunteer head usher Maile Hulihan at [mailehulihan@earthlink.net](mailto:mailehulihan@earthlink.net) or 978-443-7020.





## Christmas Services

### *Sunday, December 10*

Time	Service	Description and Music
10:00 a.m.	"Love's Incarnation," including the "Little Angels"	"Little Angels" is a long-standing tradition at First Parish. Our youngest children are invited to dress as "Little Angels" and process into the Sanctuary singing "This Little Light of Mine" for the congregation.

### *Tuesday, December 19, Chapel*

Time	Service	Description and Music
7:30 p.m.	"Blue Holiday Vespers—Find a Stillness"	Rev. Marion Visel, Rev. Jo VonRue, Beth Norton, and the By Your Side Singers will offer a holiday alternative—a quiet space to share reflective words of remembrance and solace.

### *Sunday, December 24, Christmas Eve Day*

Time	Service	Description and Music
10:00 a.m.	"A Time of Wonder and Delight" Christmas Eve Morning	All ages are invited to a special service that will send us outdoors together! Bundle up to discover special stations around First Parish grounds. We will sing joyful carols and find some surprises along our way. Our time together will culminate with decorating a tree for wildlife and drinking hot cider.
5:00 p.m.	Candlelight Christmas Eve Service	Music by our Children's Choirs.
7:00 p.m.	Candlelight Christmas Eve Service	Music by the Gospel Choir.
9:00 p.m.	Candlelight Christmas Eve Service	Music by the First Parish Choir.

*Our "Little Angels" procession will be part of the December 10 Sunday service. Each Christmas Eve service concludes with candlelighting and "Silent Night."*

## Christmas Eve Morning

### "A Time of Wonder and Delight"

**Sunday, December 24, 10:00 a.m.**



All ages are invited to a special service that will send us outdoors together! Bundle up to discover special stations around First Parish grounds. We will sing joyful carols and find some surprises along our way. Our time together will culminate with decorating a tree for wildlife and drinking hot cider.





## Blue Holiday Vespers

**“Find a Stillness”**

**Tuesday, December 19, 7:30 p.m., Chapel**

Gather in community to find stillness in the midst of all that is going on in the world and in your own life. Find comfort in the beauty of candles, music, and understanding. Rev. Marion Visel, Rev. Jo VonRue, Beth Norton, and the By Your Side Singers will offer a holiday alternative—a quiet space to share reflective words of remembrance and solace. Though the winter holidays are not always merry, this time can be a time of loving kindness and gentle community. All are welcome.

## Poinsettia Celebration

**Sundays, December 3 and 10, visit the poinsettia table at coffee hour**

**Deadline: December 13**

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 18 order of service, and the poinsettias will decorate the Sanctuary throughout the holidays. Lovely!



### Donations

To donate a poinsettia:

- Visit the poinsettia table at coffee hour following the December 3 and 10 services.
- Stop by the Parish Hall before these services at 9:30 a.m.
- Contact Linda Reynolds at [LSmithReynolds@aol.com](mailto:LSmithReynolds@aol.com) or 978- 371-0562.
- Leave a note and donation in the office before December 13 (suggested amount \$20).

Your donation supports the work of the Flower Committee throughout the year.



## Coffee Hour Surprises

You never know just what you'll find at coffee hour. Tables of interesting people and topics, the “getting to know you” beverage line, a muffin or two (or three?), catching up and problem solving on the fly. And then there are the surprises—our wonderful Dawn van Patten, for example, and her very creative spider.

## Sunday Forums

**November 26 through January 7 – No Forums**

The Forums are on holiday break until January 14, 2018, which will feature a one-hour documentary film on the life of Carola Domar, Holocaust survivor and longtime Concord resident. The film is entitled “Exile and Community: The Life of Carola Domar.”

Questions? Contact a cochair: Pat Brinkman, [pabrinkman@comcast.net](mailto:pabrinkman@comcast.net); or Alan Whitney, [awhitney@alum.mit.edu](mailto:awhitney@alum.mit.edu). Thank you for your continued support.

## Reflection and Visioning

### What's This All About?

#### A New Practice, Once Every Five Years

Throughout the 2017-18 church year, the Standing Committee will be actively soliciting input about what you, as members of the congregation, want. What's working? What programs or services might be added? Or improved?



If you were part of First Parish in 2012, you may find this effort similar to work we did with Interim Minister Elaine Perisluha. We reviewed our history in listening sessions, we completed a survey created by the Ministerial Search Committee, and we held a church-wide weekend retreat at Concord-Carlisle High School. This, then, is the second in what we plan to be a regular reassessment, every five years.

#### What You Might Want to Know

- Your voice and participation are important to our community.
- Information gathered will help guide the Standing Committee, Senior Minister, and staff in setting goals for our collective future.
- Assessments every five years are common practice among well-functioning non-profit organizations.
- The Senior Minister and Standing Committee agree that a five-year, congregation-wide self-evaluation is a healthy way to ensure regular congregational input.

#### What You Need to Do

Plan to share your reflections and visions with these events.

- **January 2018**—participate in at least one of the 10-12 discussion sessions
- **February 2018**—complete a survey in February
- **March 9-10, 2018**—join us for a second congregational retreat

#### Who to Talk With

Feel free to direct questions to any member of the Standing Committee.

Jeff Brainerd <jeffbrainerd@gmail.com>

Dave Elwood <daveelwood@hotmail.com>

Kristin Haddad, Chair <kristin.haddad@gmail.com>

Peter Nobile, Clerk <peter.nobile@gmail.com>

Toby Smith Ropeik <tobyasmith@gmail.com>

Michelle Fortier, Treasurer

Kate Svrcek <katesvrcek@hotmail.com>

Lora Venesy <venesy@comcast.net>

Patty Popov <ppopov@nichols-pratt.com>

Tom Wilson <twilson@wilsongroup.com>

John Lowe <john.moore.lowe@gmail.com>

A handout on this important initiative is also available at the end of this newsletter.



## Operations—Snow Emergencies

### When does First Parish close, cancel events or delay them?

When the Town of Concord closes schools or Town buildings, First Parish will be closed. First Parish also responds when the National Weather Service issues a local blizzard or major storm warning, including poor travel conditions, or requests that people refrain from travel.

### Where to Find Information

When a decision is made to cancel or delay the opening of First Parish, details will be promptly announced via:

- FP Announce
- RE Announce
- First Parish website, <http://firstparish.org/wp/>
- First Parish telephone greeting, 978-369-9602
- Boston TV channels
  - WCVB Channel 5
  - 7NEWS/NBC
  - WBZ-TV News Channel 4 and WBZ NewsRadio 1030



Please look to one of the above sources for details on any First Parish weather-related cancellation or delay.

Fifi Ball

Director of Operations

[fball@firstparish.org](mailto:fball@firstparish.org) or 978-369-9602 x456

## Adult Religious Education

### First Parish Men's Spirituality Retreat

#### Follow-Up

On Saturday, November 11, 14 wonderful men, led by Rev. Howard N. Dana, Steve Cadwell, and Zach Roe, met for the day to explore and celebrate being gay and straight in today's heteronormative culture. The gathering was both informative and emotionally satisfying. New friendships were made. We learned that men are capable of loving one another without fear when in a respectful relationship.

This was the third spiritual retreat for men in the past two years. Other men, gay and straight, are encouraged to attend the next retreat when it is announced, to explore what it means to be a man in today's culture.

## Religious Education (RE) News

### A Message from Amy

There are some Christmas memories that we carry in our hearts. One of those treasured times in my life was Christmas Eve 2008. As a parish minister, it seemed like a funny turn of events to be expecting a baby in December. However, I was delighted to be able to snuggle in at home and ask a good colleague, Rev. Lark d'Helen, to offer our Candlelight Service. Once our daughter was born on December 9 and, thankfully we were both healthy, Lark invited our family to make an appearance in the service. In case any of us did not feel up to it, this plan was strictly confidential.



On Christmas Eve, we dressed in holiday clothes and bundled our newborn baby in a fluffy blanket. We drove over to Channing Memorial Church while the service was in progress and quietly entered through a side door. Once the Sanctuary was glowing with candlelight and the congregation began singing “Silent Night,” Lark opened the door and we appeared on the chancel. We made our way down the aisle while everyone sang, “Holy infant so tender and mild, sleep in heavenly peace . . .” Looking into the faces of the congregation that I served there were tears of joy and amazement. With my baby daughter in my arms and Peter at my side, I sat in a rocking chair on the chancel for the remainder of the service. It was a sacred moment filled with love and hope and peace—all the promises of Christmas.



Blessings of the season, Amy  
Rev. Amy Freedman, Minister of Religious Education  
Contact: [afreedman@firstparish.org](mailto:afreedman@firstparish.org) or 978-369-9602



### Religious Education

Day, Date, Time	Theme	Description
Sunday, December 3 10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.	Advent	Religious Exploration
Sunday, December 10 10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.	Christmas	Religious Exploration
Sunday, December 17 10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.	Hanukkah	Religious Exploration (Return Guest boxes to First Parish.)
Sunday, December 24 10:00 a.m., 5:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m., 9:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve	Religious Exploration



## Little Angels Sunday

**Sunday, December 10, 9:30 a.m., Classrooms**  
**Wear a White or Light-Colored Shirt**



All children who wish to be “Little Angels” should arrive at their classrooms by 9:30 a.m. We will assist them in donning simple robes and halos, and then we will head upstairs to practice their procession and song in the Sanctuary.

Please have your child *wear a white or other light-colored shirt*. The two front pews will be reserved for parents of angels. Our hope is that this will be fun for everyone, kids and adults. Please reassure your child that it's really okay to choose not to participate.

Contact Dawn Van Patten with any questions: [dvanpatten@firstparish.org](mailto:dvanpatten@firstparish.org).

## Little Angels Rehearsals

**Sundays, November 26 and December 3, during RE Classes**

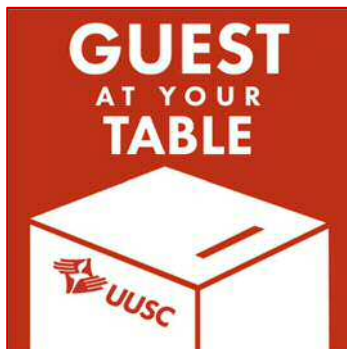
“Little Angels” is a long-standing tradition at First Parish. On Sunday, December 10, our youngest children are invited to dress as “Little Angels” and process into the Sanctuary, singing “This Little Light of Mine” for the congregation.

RE classes on the Lower Level (Preschool, Kindergarten, and First Grade) will learn the song together during RE classes on November 26 and December 3.

Please contact Dawn Van Patten with any questions: [dvanpatten@firstparish.org](mailto:dvanpatten@firstparish.org).

## Guest at Your Table Box

**Return by Sunday, December 17**



Over the holiday season, we invite a “Guest at Your Table,” a traditional fundraising practice for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC). The boxes were given out during our Thanksgiving service and are now available in the church office.

Please bring your “Guest at Your Table” box back to church on Sunday, December 17. Our Grade 5, who are learning about the UUSC, will count our contributions. Or you may count up your donation and write a check for the amount payable to UUSC. UUSC advances human rights and social justice around the world. For more information, visit [uus.org](http://uus.org). Questions? Email Amy: [afreedman@firstparish.org](mailto:afreedman@firstparish.org).

## OWL Parent Orientation

**Sunday, December 3, 11:30 a.m.- 2:00 p.m., Emerson Room**  
**Both parents are required to attend the orientation.**

For Grade 8, the “Our Whole Lives” (OWL) comprehensive sexuality program will be offered at First Parish in Concord beginning in January. The goals of the program are to help young people learn about safe sexual relationships in the context of Unitarian Universalist principles, to help them make responsible decisions, and to increase their understanding and respect for themselves and others.



In order for your child to be enrolled in OWL, both parents are required to attend a Parent Orientation on Sunday, December 3, from 11:30 to 2:00 p.m. at First Parish. The OWL Grade 8 teachers this year will facilitate the orientation: Renee Lloyd, Louisa Paushter, Tim Peacock, Eric Read.

Please let Amy know ASAP if you plan to enroll your Grade 8 student in this important program: [afreedman@firstparish.org](mailto:afreedman@firstparish.org).

## Christmas Caroling

**Saturday, December 16, 1:00 p.m., Parlor**  
**Refreshments for carolers follow at First Parish**

Come help bring holiday cheer to our parishioners and others who can't get out this season. Singers of all ages wanted! We will meet in the Parlor at First Parish and carpool to area nursing facilities to sing. Afterward, we'll head back to First Parish to enjoy cookies and hot chocolate together. Please feel free to wear festive attire and bring cookies to share! For more information, please contact Lora Venesy, [venesy@comcast.net](mailto:venesy@comcast.net) or 978-254-5433.



*Photograph by Rev. Jo VonRue*

If you have questions, please contact

- ♥ Dawn Van Patten, Assistant Director of Religious Education: [dvanpatten@firstparish.org](mailto:dvanpatten@firstparish.org)
- ♥ Rev. Amy Freedman, Minister of Religious Education: [afreedman@firstparish.org](mailto:afreedman@firstparish.org).

## Children's Holiday Crafts Workshop

**Saturday, December 2, from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m., First Parish**

First Parish children are invited to spend the afternoon creating beautiful handmade gifts for the holidays with the help of an intergenerational community of adult and teen helper elves.

[Read more](#) . . .



## MUUsings



William Grant Still (1895-1978) earned the designation “Dean of African American Composers” for his many musical accomplishments and “firsts”—first person of color to conduct a major American symphony orchestra, first black composer to have an opera performed by a major American opera company, and first major work performed by a leading American symphony orchestra. The list goes on.

Born in Mississippi and raised in Little Rock, Arkansas, he went on to study at Oberlin, to perform and compose in New York during the Harlem Renaissance, and to write for radio and film in Los Angeles. Two world wars, the communist scare of the fifties, and the Civil Rights movement both shaped and scarred him. With his wife and collaborator, Verna Arvey, a daughter of Russian Jewish immigrants, Still raised a biracial family in the 1950's and 1960's. The couple's multicultural perspective was progressive for their time. They recognized the worth and dignity of all people, regardless of race or ethnicity.

In 1967, exactly 50 years ago, Still published *Christmas in the Western World*, an utterly charming piece for chorus, piano, and string orchestra. Influenced by his wife's lifelong interest in the “music of the Americas” (long before the dominant population of the United States had become aware of “other” Americas, as they are now), Still arranged this set of nine carols representing South, Central, and North American cultures. He composed a tenth, original song in the style of a rhythmic African-American spiritual. Arvey supplied translations of the Spanish texts, and wrote a narrative that gives context to the carols. Together, they tell the Christmas story in voices of cultures from the Americas, as interpreted by a mid-century African-American composer.

The First Parish Choir and Festival Orchestra, with Eric Huenneke at the piano, will offer *Christmas in the Western World* during our worship on Sunday, December 3. Coincidentally, this day is the 39<sup>th</sup> anniversary of William Grant Still's death. When I relayed this information to the composer's daughter, Judith Anne Still, she responded, “I am glad that you will do the piece on his last day—I think God is in that timing. My Father was in dark days by the time he died, and there was no funeral.”

*Continued next page.*



On December 3, the first Sunday in the season of Advent, may our worship celebrate the season, the Christmas story, and the life of this remarkable American composer.

Blessings, Beth  
Beth Norton, Director of Music  
Contact at [music@firstparish.org](mailto:music@firstparish.org) or 978-369-9602



## Pastoral Care

**Walking with One Another through the Changes Life Brings**

### Ministers

**Minister for Pastoral Care**, Rev. Marion Visel

Email: [mvisel@firstparish.org](mailto:mvisel@firstparish.org)

Church: 978-369-9602, ext. 414

Cell: 203-931-5329

**Senior Minister**, Rev. Howard N. Dana

Email: [hdana@firstparish.org](mailto:hdana@firstparish.org)

Church: 978-369-9602, ext. 411

Cell: 717-412-8543

**Minister in Residence**, Rev. Jo VonRue

Email: [jvonrue@firstparish.org](mailto:jvonrue@firstparish.org)

Church: 978-369-9602, ext. 412

Cell: 570-899-0457

**December Pastoral Care Lay Minister**, Sue Dobbie

Email: [susandobbie@gmail.com](mailto:susandobbie@gmail.com)

Cell: 978-501-6969



### Calling All First Parish Cooks

**Friday, December 8, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Kitchen**

It's time to restock the First Parish Caring Connection freezer. We will make delicious meals for those in our community who have a need. Contact Enid Boasberg, [harpplayer@comcast.net](mailto:harpplayer@comcast.net) or 978-371-0465, to let us know you'll be there for this fun way of helping others.



## Blue Holiday Vespers

**"Find a Stillness"**

**Tuesday, December 19, 7:30 p.m., Chapel**

[Read more on page 5.](#)



## Caregiver Support Group

**New Members Welcome**

**First Monday of Each Month**



Are you caring for a family member, an aging parent (perhaps while caring for your own children), an ill spouse, a sibling or a child with physical or mental issues? Whether you are providing direct care or overseeing care at a distance, you don't have to sacrifice yourself in the process. Get support from others while learning new coping skills.

We welcome new members to join this ongoing group which meets the afternoon of the first Monday of each month. To learn more, contact Marion Visel, Minister for Pastoral Care, [mvisel@firstparish.org](mailto:mvisel@firstparish.org) or 203-931-5239; or Diane Clapp, [dianebamclapp@gmail.com](mailto:dianebamclapp@gmail.com). Also, call one of them if you are unable to attend Monday afternoon meetings.

## Help Distribute Holiday Flowers

**Deliveries: Tuesday, December 26, 10:00 a.m., Sanctuary**

Bring good cheer to a parish member and perhaps meet someone for the first time. Contact Caitlin Selle at [selle.caitlin5@gmail.com](mailto:selle.caitlin5@gmail.com) to let her know you plan to deliver a Christmas poinsettia or two, and meet her in the Sanctuary on Tuesday, December 26, at 10:00 a.m.



## Holiday Memorial Wreath

**At the Front of the Sanctuary during December.**

The Holiday Memorial Wreath, located at the front of the Sanctuary during December, 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. We invite you also to tie a black ribbon on the wreath in memory of people of color lost to injustice.

## Pastoral Care Library

The Pastoral Care Library has new books and a new look! Many of the books in our collection are donations, which are appreciated. Some, however, are purchased especially for the library and Marion Visel has recently added some exciting new titles in a variety of pastoral care subjects.



New books are identified with an eye-catching bookmark and **NEW!** sticker in bright red. Stop by and check out our new look and our new books! We're located in the hallway behind the stage.

Six of the new books in the Pastoral Care Library:

- The Etiquette of Illness: what to say when you can't find the words, by Susan Halpern
- Help Me Live: 20 things people with cancer want you to know, by Lori Hope
- Cancer Caregiving from A-Z by the American Cancer Society
- When Things Fall Apart: heart advice for difficult times, by Pema Chodron
- The Miracle of Mindfulness, by Thich Nhat Hanh
- A Bicycling Life: From the Dutch countryside to the streets of Concord, as told to Nancy Shohet West by Erica Morrison

## Minister in Residence

**Sunday Service, December 31, 10:00 a.m.**

**Secret Santa or a year without pants . . .  
Secret Santa is just around the corner!**



AWE is sponsoring our Secret Santa work this year, and I want to take a few minutes to talk about what Secret Santa means. I was a child who benefited from receiving anonymous gifts from donors just like the ones we will all be giving this Christmastime. Most Christmases I would receive a new backpack that would have a variety of things inside. I don't really remember too much of what I received each year, but one thing that my mom always asked for was a new pair of jeans. This gift would ensure that each year we would have a pair of pants that would fit us for wintertime. I remember a few years when I did not receive my pair of pants (or any anonymous gift for that matter), and that year I had to continue wearing my old pants, which by the new year were too

*Continued next page.*

short and just generally too small. For a poor girl like me, this just gave the kids another reason to target me.

One of the things I have learned about this church is how very generous you are with your financial resources. When we ask you to give for those in need, you don't ask questions, you just give, and that is such a magical thing about this congregation. So as our Secret Santa season is approaching, and you see the women from AWE at coffee hour handing out Christmas lists for individuals, I want to encourage you to take one of those lists to fulfill knowing how much those gifts will mean to those receiving them. For most, it will be the only gifts they receive.



There are some families who are in need of a computer. Do you have a used working laptop with a working power cord that you could donate to this cause? Please check out my brief digital newsletter [here on YouTube](#).

And, remember, you are strong; you are beautiful; and you are loved!

Warmly, Rev. Jo  
Rev. Jennifer "Jo" VonRue  
Minister in Residence  
[jvonrue@firstparish.org](mailto:jvonrue@firstparish.org) or 978-369-9602, ext. 412

P.S. This was taken after our First Parish Family Night! At the end of the night, the kids really enjoyed painting my face, and my hands, and my arms, and my fingernails . . . it was so much fun!



## Legacy Giving Program



We recently held our second meeting with the congregation on our Legacy Giving Program. It focused on estate and legacy planning. More to come.

If you have already put First Parish in your will, or trusts, or as a beneficiary in your estate, we would like to hear from you. We are looking to appreciate those who have taken this important step.

Please send a note to Fifi Ball at [fball@firstparish.org](mailto:fball@firstparish.org) or Tom Wilson, chair, Legacy Giving Committee at [twilson@wilsongroup.com](mailto:twilson@wilsongroup.com). Become a member of our Legacy Circle. It is easy, simple, and fun. Thank you.

## Standing Committee News

**Next Meeting: Sunday, December 10, 6:00 p.m., Emerson Room**

### Meeting Summary

On November 12, the Standing Committee met in the Emerson Room to hear regular reports, to examine the Staff Compensation Report, and to provide feedback to the Chair. We reviewed our current progress on the Year for Reflection and Visioning and our goals. In December, we will reconsider the status of our Black Lives Matter banner and learn about the upcoming Beloved Conversations curriculum. Minutes from our meetings are regularly posted [on the website](#).



### Nominating Committee

The Standing Committee unanimously approved Jennifer Izzo to the Nominating Committee to fill a vacancy. She joins Bruce Blumberg, Jan Goddard-Taylor, Doug Hardy, Eric Moore, Mark Russell Prior, and Alane Wallis. The Nominating Committee is responsible for putting forth candidates for the Standing Committee and Church Officers each year at Annual Meeting.

### Staff Compensation Report

Twice a year, the Standing Committee reviews the actual compensation and benefits of each staff member and compares it to the guidelines recommended by the UUA. This regular practice is scheduled to ensure our awareness of the quality of our staff compensation and to help to guide us when considering staff raises and staff bonuses. From the report, it appears that increasing staff salaries will likely be a goal for next year's budget.

### Year for Reflection and Visioning

Throughout the 2017-18 church year, First Parish will take time to reflect on the present and envision its future. This is the first in what will be a



once-every-five-year reassessment of where our community is and where we want to go. In November, several small groups convened to address the question about the focus of the upcoming congregational conversations and survey. A rough schedule was outlined, with conversations occurring in January and a survey early in February. The initiative will culminate in a congregational visioning summit the weekend of

March 10. Please watch FPAnnounce, the *Sunday News*, and the website for more opportunities to shape our future together.



*Continued next page.*



## We Want to Hear from You!

Standing Committee members are always eager to talk with First Parishioners. On Sunday morning, before church, one of us can be found near the Parlor, greeting parishioners. Please reach out to any of us at coffee hour, at an event, by phone, or by e-mail to discuss your First Parish experiences. You can find the contact information for each Standing Committee member, along with meeting agendas, governing policies, and meeting minutes and reports [on our website](#).



Best Regards,  
Kristin Coffman Haddad, chair, Standing Committee  
[kristin.haddad@gmail.com](mailto:kristin.haddad@gmail.com) or 978-254-5012



## Arts at First Parish

### Fostering Community through the Arts

Each month the First Parish Arts Council will highlight arts events for the upcoming month that offer opportunities to participate in the ministry of the arts at First Parish.

Day	Date	Time	Event
Friday	December 1	7:00 p.m.	Chapel, AWE free movie, <i>The Eagle Huntress</i> , about a 13-year-old girl
Saturday	December 2	1:30 p.m.	Children's Craft Workshop
Sunday	December 3	3:00 p.m.	WPA Holiday Concert and Tea; Julia Zhou, piano
Wednesday	December 6	<b>6:30 p.m.*</b>	Arts Council meeting (all welcome)
Saturday	December 9	9:30 a.m.	First Parish Photography Club (open to all First Parish adults)
Sunday	December 10	4:00 p.m.	Copley Singers Holiday Concert
Friday	December 22	7:30 p.m.	Rise Up Caroling!—a special edition of the monthly open folk song circle

**\*RED** = different time

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

## 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. Unless otherwise noted, questions may be directed to [music@firstparish.org](mailto:music@firstparish.org).

## Holiday Concert

### The Copley Singers

Sunday, December 10, 4:00 p.m., Sanctuary

The Copley Singers are a long-standing Boston tradition during the holiday season, and now they're making it easier than ever to come and enjoy them.



Led by renowned conductor Brian Jones (formerly the music director at Trinity Church in Copley Square, Boston) and featuring the prodigy organist, Katelyn Emerson, this beautiful and powerful chorus has been heralded as "sensuous, nuanced, expansive, and full of goodwill." Come and usher in the holiday season with holiday music performed with flare, excitement, and sheer beauty.



Tickets are \$20.00. Advanced tickets can be purchased from [Brown Paper Tickets](#) at [CopleySingers.org](http://CopleySingers.org). Tickets can also be purchased at the door. Concert sponsored by the Music Ministry.

## Social Action Community

### Faith into Action

## News from Zach

Happy December, First Parish community!



Last month saw some great things happening here with the Social Action Community, and we have some great things coming up!

### *Sanctuary Church - Level 2*

Thanks to the hard work of our Immigration Justice Task Force, we have officially become a Sanctuary Church – Level 2. This means that we will partner with First Parish in Bedford to support them when they are housing an immigrant in danger of deportation. This support will include providing necessary supplies and having parishioners stay with the immigrants overnight. Please contact Tony Rodriguez for more information or to get involved.

### *Race Conversations*

Race Conversations has formed a steering committee to plan for the coming of Beloved Conversations. If you are unfamiliar with this amazing program, you can find more information [here](#). Be on the lookout for more information about how to join in this

*Continued next page.*

transformative program! We will be partnering with First Parish in Lexington in this endeavor.

### *Intersectionality Conversation*

On of November 29, we had our second meeting for our SAC Intersectionality Conversation. We had the opportunity to share current projects and activities that various groups are doing. There was also discussion of how to engage across SAC groups, how to engage non-SAC groups at FP in social action work, and how to be in better communication about the work we are doing.

### *Bag Challenge Food Drive*



Our 50 Bag Challenge food drive for Open Table was an absolute success. We gathered over 60 bags of food and other needed items for this wonderful organization, which totaled about 900 lbs. We also went gleanng with Boston Area Gleaners. There was a great turnout from our parish, and we were able to collect 2440 lbs. of cabbage. This was sent to various food banks and shelters to provide for those in need.

### *Community Building*

In January, families from our Religious Education program will be joining with Santuario Luterano, a Spanish-speaking, predominantly immigrant, Lutheran community in Waltham, to join in their celebration of Three Kings Day on January 7. We will also be making “snack-bags” for low-income children to take to school, and these will be given through Open Table.



So many great things are happening with social action here at First Parish in Concord! Keep an eye out for more through FP Announce, *Sunday News* insert announcements, and our [Facebook page](#)!

Happy Holidays everyone!  
In peace and hope,  
Zach  
Zachary Roe  
Social Action Coordinator  
[zroe@firstparish.org](mailto:zroe@firstparish.org), 978-369-9602, ext.450

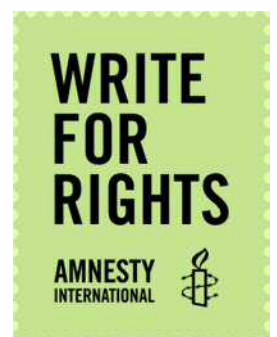


### **Amnesty International, Group 15**

#### **Write4Rights**

**Tuesday, December 19, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m., Greeley Room**

We hope you'll join us at our annual December Write4Rights meeting, when we, along with tens of thousands of people around the globe, write in support of selected human rights



*Continued next page.*

activists at risk in their home countries. It will give you a taste of the variety of actions individuals are engaged in worldwide—and a taste of better-than-usual refreshments as we celebrate the holiday season. For more information, contact Nancy Lyons, [njlyons22@gmail.com](mailto:njlyons22@gmail.com), or 978-369-6109.

## Partner Congregation News

### *Pilgrimage to Transylvania*



Plans are progressing nicely for the multigenerational pilgrimage next April to Székelykeresztúr, Transylvania, Romania, where our partner congregation is located. Twenty-one adults and six children from First Parish are going, including staff members Howard Dana, Beth Norton, Amy Freedman, and Dawn Van Patten. The plane tickets have now been bought, and the travelers are meeting monthly to learn about Transylvania and how to prepare for this exciting journey.

### *Scholarships—Many Thanks*

Many thanks to the 58 generous individuals, families and groups, who have provided Transylvania students scholarships to help make possible a high school education for 52 deserving rural Hungarian minority students at the Hungarian Unitarian High School in Székelykeresztúr. These scholarships make a huge difference, not only to the students and their families, but also to their home communities, and the Unitarian school in Székelykeresztúr. Thank you!!

## Race Conversations Group

### **“Beloved Conversations”**

#### **Beginning Friday and Saturday, February 2 and 3**

First Parish members and friends will undertake a joint Beloved Conversations program with First Parish in Lexington to explore the invisible footprint of race and ethnicity, and interrupting racism today. The opening retreat will be led by trainers from Meadville Lombard Theological School. Thereafter, groups of 10 to 12 participants will meet for two hours every other week for eight sessions. The opening retreat is Friday evening, February 2, and all day Saturday, February 3, followed by eight small-group sessions.



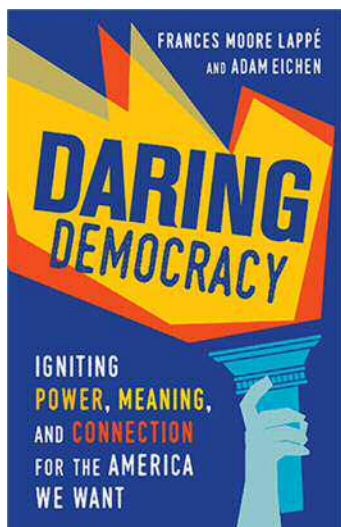
Sponsored by the Race Conversations Group. Free. Limited seats available. Sign up at coffee hour beginning Sunday, December 3, or contact Lea Delacour, [leadelacour@comcast.net](mailto:leadelacour@comcast.net).



## Reclaim Our Democracy

### “Daring Democracy”

Thursday, December 7, 7:30 – 9:00 p.m., Sanctuary



The legendary *Diet for a Small Planet* author Frances Moore Lappé and organizer Adam Eichen will share highlights of their empowering new [UU Common Read](#) *Daring Democracy*. “Without democracy there’s almost no chance of tackling distinct environmental, racial justice, labor, poverty, or food justice problems.” We will learn and discuss ways to engage in the movement to save our democracy. Their presentation will be followed by a book signing reception in the Parish Hall.

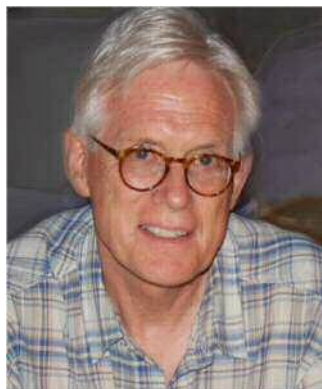
“This book, perhaps better than any other, shows Americans that the democracy they want is possible.”—Lawrence Lessig. Contact [fredvandeu@gmail.com](mailto:fredvandeu@gmail.com) for questions. Sponsored by [Reclaim Our Democracy](#).

## Transcendentalism Author Talk

### Transcendentalism and the Cultivation of the Soul

Sunday, December 17, 3:00 p.m., Parish Hall

UU Minister Emeritus Rev. Dr. Barry Andrews will discuss his latest book *Transcendentalism and the Cultivation of the Soul*.



Transcendentalists developed spiritual practices to nurture their souls and discover the divine: keeping journals, contemplation, walking, reading, simple living, and conversation. Andrews demonstrates how Emerson, Thoreau, Fuller, and others pursued rewarding spiritual lives that inspired them to fight for abolition, women’s rights, and education reform. He reveals how these spiritual practices are valuable to spiritual seekers and religious liberals today.

Books will be available for sale and signing. Sponsored by the Transcendentalism Council and Thoreau Society. Contact Dianne Weiss at [diannemcweiss@comcast.net](mailto:diannemcweiss@comcast.net).



## Women's News



### AWE Upcoming Events

#### Advocates for Women's Empowerment

- **Film Series:** Friday, December 1, 7:00 p.m., Chapel
- **Book Group:** Tuesday, January 2, 7:00 p.m.
- **Cook and Serve:** Sunday, February 11, from 3:00 to 5:30 p.m., Rosie's Place, Boston
- **Next Meeting:** Saturday, December 16, 8:00 a.m., Serendipity in Maynard

#### Free Feminist Film Series

We will show "The Eagle Huntress," a documentary about a 13-year-old girl who trains to become the first female in 12 generations to become an eagle hunter. Contact: Lou Toussaint ([mloutoussaint@gmail.com](mailto:mloutoussaint@gmail.com))

#### Book Group

We'll read *Surviving Domestic Violence: Voices of Women Who Broke Free* by Elaine Weiss. Contact: Jen Izzo ([jbizzo@hotmail.com](mailto:jbizzo@hotmail.com)). Our corresponding social action will be with Gifts of Hope Unlimited, a Sudbury-based organization that supports and assists individuals affected by relationship violence.

#### Cook and Serve – Rosie's Place



Thank you to everyone who volunteered at Rosie's Place on October 29. Sign up with Suzie Weaver ([skatesuzie@aol.com](mailto:skatesuzie@aol.com)) to volunteer in February.

#### Monthly Meetings

Our meetings are the third Saturday of the month. Our meetings and events are open to women, men, and people of all gender identities and expressions who wish to advance women's rights and improve their lives.

#### Mailing List

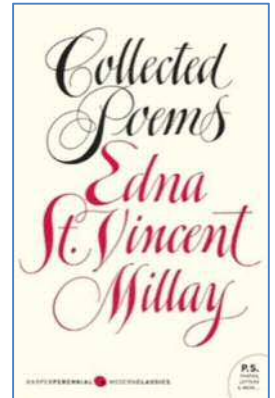
To join, contact Lora Venesy, [venesy@comcast.net](mailto:venesy@comcast.net).



## Women's AM/PM Book Group

**Monday, December 4, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m., Brooks Room**  
**Tuesday, December 5, 9:30 to 11:00 a.m., Brooks Room**

We will be reading the poetry of Edna St. Vincent Millay for our November/December discussions. You are welcome to choose any collection of Millay's poetry to explore, or contact Darien Smith at [darien@smithquest.com](mailto:darien@smithquest.com) for a list of suggested poems and sources if you are not already on the Book Group email list.



All women of First Parish are warmly invited to read some of Millay's poetry and join a discussion. There's no need to sign up!

## Dates and Books for 2017-2018

Date	Book	Author
Dec. 4/5	Poetry of Edna St. Vincent Millay (Stay tuned for suggested selections and sources.)	Edna St. Vincent Millay
Jan. 29/30	<i>News of the World</i>	Paulette Jiles
Feb. 26/27	<i>Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right</i>	Arlie Russell Hochschild
March 26/27	<i>Commonwealth</i>	Ann Patchett
April 23/24	<i>America's First Daughter</i> NOTE: The April 23 date may be changed, depending on Concord's Town Meeting date.	Stephanie Dray and Laura Kamoie
May 21/22	<i>Necessary Lies</i>	Diane Chamberlain

## Women's Goddess Covenant Circle

**Winter Solstice Celebration for All Parishioners**  
**Wednesday, December 20, at 7:00 p.m. in the Parlor**

Come one, come all, to celebrate the Winter Solstice with stories, songs, blazing Yule log, a spiral dance, seasonal refreshments, and more! The Women's Goddess Covenant Circle invites the entire First Parish community with families and friends to join us at this festive gathering. Questions? Contact Darien Smith at [darien@smithquest.com](mailto:darien@smithquest.com).



## Women's Parish Association

### *Friday Night with Friends*

#### **Customized Candle Decorating**

**Friday, January 12, 7:00 p.m.**

**Reservations by January 9**

Add light and beauty to your winter months! Join other First Parish folks for refreshments, socializing, and learning to decorate candles.



Richard Fortier will entertain us on his guitar throughout the evening, and Barbara Forman will give an introductory talk about the history of lighting, followed by a fun workshop with Merrill Comeau giving artistic advice. No prior experience is necessary.

Hands-on advice and all necessary supplies will be available, and you can bring your creations home. Cost: \$7.00, which covers dessert, beverages, and supplies. For reservations and food requirements, contact the office at 978-369-9602 or Dian Pekin at [Pekindc@Comcast.net](mailto:Pekindc@Comcast.net).

### *Holiday Concert and Tea*

**Sunday, December 3, 3:00 p.m., Sanctuary and Parish Hall**

**Reservations by December 1**



This year's Holiday Concert and Tea, sponsored by the Women's Parish Association, will add special sparkle to your holiday season. It features award winning classical pianist Julia Zhou, who was a runner-up in a recent Concord Orchestra's Young Artist Competition. Following the concert, a festive tea will be served. There is no charge for this event. Attendees are asked to bring plates of sweets to share, if they can. Bring your family and friends for a joyful afternoon!

For reservations. contact the office at 978-369-9602 or Dian Pekin at [pekindc@comcast.net](mailto:pekindc@comcast.net) by December 1. All are warmly invited.

### *Silent Auction for Thoreau Book*

#### **Bid at Coffee Hours**

**Author will match highest bid up to 5K**

The WPA is holding a silent auction for a delightful illustrated book by Helen Stoddard entitled *H.D. Thoreau, Scenario of His Early Life*. The bidding sheet will be available at coffee hours through January. Proceeds will be used for First Parish maintenance. Helen will match the highest bid up to five thousand dollars.





## Women's Retreats 2018

**Registration Deadline: January 7**

*"Connections and Connecting"*

Once again we will host three retreat offerings:

- ♥ **1st Weekend Away:** Friday evening to Sunday afternoon, January 19-21, at Senexet House, Connecticut
- ♥ **2nd Weekend Away:** Friday evening to Sunday afternoon, January 26-28, at Senexet House, Connecticut
- ♥ **"At Home" Retreat:** Friday evening, February 9, and Saturday morning through afternoon on February 10, at First Parish



This year's retreats will focus on *Connections* – *with others, with your own deeper self, with nature, with and via technology, etc.* Banish all cares as we relax, have fun, rejuvenate, get to know each other, and explore what connections and connecting can mean to us. All women of First Parish are warmly invited and welcome!

### Registration

Register by January 7. Late registrations will be accepted on a space available basis. Registration forms will be available at coffee hour December 10 and 17, and January 7. Starting December 10, forms will also be available in the church office and at <http://firstparish.org/forms>.

Questions? Contact Bozena Smith at [bozenasmith@mindspring.com](mailto:bozenasmith@mindspring.com) or 978-371-1060.

## Other Cool Stuff

### Auction Party

**"Holiday Hijinks"—Spots Available**

**Saturday, December 2, 7:00 p.m., at Sara and Stoney Ballard's in Concord**



The Auction party planned for October 2016 was postponed and has been rescheduled. *Note the corrected start time above.* Enjoy a fun evening with old and new First Parish friends. Decadent desserts and lively libations will be provided by your hosts: the Ballards, Darien Smith, and Biff Holt. More guest spots are welcome.

Spots are \$25 each and limited to 50. If you'd like to attend, please email Sara Ballard at [sara@sb.org](mailto:sara@sb.org) with the number of spots you'd like. Then make out your check to First

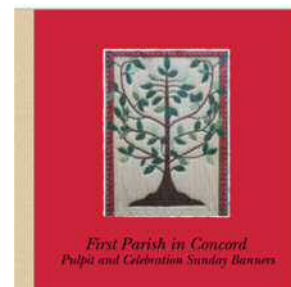
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Parish with “Auction Party” on the memo line, and send or drop it off at the First Parish office. See you at the party!

### **Banner Photo Book** **Visit Us at Coffee Hour**

The Banner Book Project Committee has completed a document of the pulpit and Celebration Sunday banners in photo and storybook form. Come to coffee hour through November and December and look for Barbara Wheeler for a view of this book and a chance to order one of your own.

Questions? Contact Barbara Wheeler, [barbw213@comcast.net](mailto:barbw213@comcast.net) or 978-369-9518.



### **Children's Holiday Craft Workshop** **Saturday, December 2, 1:30 – 4:30 p.m.**

First Parish children are invited to spend the afternoon creating beautiful handmade gifts for the holidays, with the help of an intergenerational community of adult and teen helper elves. Parents can enjoy their own coffee room this year. Cost: \$15 per child, \$45 maximum per family. No RSVP needed; just show up!

If you can volunteer, we always need more elves. Please contact Kristin Moore, [craftworkshop@firstparish.org](mailto:craftworkshop@firstparish.org), 978-254-5037, or any other head elf: Kimberly Brainerd, Dave Elwood, or Jeanne Williams. See you at the Workshop!



### **Concord Area Humanists**

**First Wednesdays, December 6 and January 10, 7:00 p.m., Parish Hall**



#### **December 6 – Dr. Jim Sherblom on “Human Flourishing”**

Many spiritually oriented religious people seek salvation and redemption. What do spiritually oriented humanists seek? Jim is an author, mystic, theologian, and entrepreneur; and in his book *Spiritual Audacity: Six Disciplines of Human Flourishing*, Rev. Jim Sherblom suggests resilience, humility, gratitude, generosity of spirit, understanding of mystery, and spiritual awakening. These are humanist fruits of the spirit. If you ever ponder these matters, come join the discussion.

### **January 10 – Ray Mount, Ph.D. “Hiking the Appalachian Trail”**

Ray is a psychologist who worked as a therapist for 30 years. Clients' issues have ranged across depression, anxiety, domestic abuse, and PTSD. He retired last March and set out to hike the Appalachian Trail, finishing in October, and experiencing a six-month sojourn through the inner world of a psychotherapist. He will describe the many opportunities for self-discovery along the trail, from breathtaking wilderness scenes to encounters with snakes and bears. His talk is beautifully illustrated with video and still photography.



All are welcome. Questions to Pat Everett, [pne@aol.com](mailto:pne@aol.com)

### **First Tuesday Group**

**"Winter Holiday Celebration: Personal Shared Holiday Traditions"**

**Tuesday, December 5, 1:30 to 3:00 p.m., Parlor**



Come with a holiday memory of a family tradition that you are willing to share. Gather around the fireplace in the Parlor, listen to others' stories, and sing a few seasonal songs. Refreshments will include eggnog, cookies, coffee, tea, and your favorite holiday treat, if you bring a plate to share (welcome, but not required). So come celebrate the holidays with shared traditions at our December meeting!

(While our heading says 65+, please come if you are interested, whatever your age.)

For more information, contact Virginia Taylor, [virginiarosstaylor@verizon.net](mailto:virginiarosstaylor@verizon.net) or 978-263-9777.

### **Secret Santa**

**Pick Names: Coffee Hour, Sunday, December 3**

**Gifts Collected: Coffee Hours, Sundays, December 3 and 10**

Make a difference this holiday season. Be part of this beloved First Parish tradition. Those receiving gifts this year are Renewal House, Walden Street School, and the Eliot Center. These gifts truly matter to those receiving them. Advocates for Women's Empowerment (AWE, formerly Reproductive Justice) is organizing the program this year.



Come pick names at coffee hour on December 3 and deliver your gifts back to coffee hour either December 3 or 10. Gifts will be collected and delivered to the recipients before Christmas. Any questions? Contact Jen Izzo at [jbizzo@hotmail.com](mailto:jbizzo@hotmail.com) or 617-869-5563 (email preferred).



## Editor's Notes

Next January *Meeting House News* deadline: **December 12, 2017**

Next Publication Date: **December 20, 2017**

## Publicity Deadlines

- **FP Announce Deadline – Noon Friday** for the following week
- **Sunday News Deadline – Noon Wednesday** before the Sunday service.  
Please note that the Order of Service insert, or *Sunday News*, is compiled, formatted, printed, folded, and inserted on Fridays. As you can imagine, it takes time to pull this all together in an already busy office, and last minute submissions are problematic. Please plan ahead. Your insert copy **MUST** be received by Noon on Wednesday. Much appreciated. Thanks for your help.

## Communications at First Parish

### To whom and by when do I send my submission?

Please pick up a copy of “Publicizing Events at First Parish in Concord” on the table outside the church office.

### Steps for Publicizing a First Parish Event

1. Plan ahead, then add a “fudge factor”—extra time for committee review and for Editor’s questions. We need you to adhere to deadlines.
2. How much lead time does the Editor need? Which Editor?
  - a. **Weekly email** – FP Announce, send to Sarah by Friday Noon
  - b. **Sunday insert** – *Sunday News*, send to Sarah by Wednesday Noon
  - c. **Monthly** – *Meeting House News (MHN)*, send to Wendy by the deadline noted in the first two pages of your last *MHN* or on [website under “News”](#)
3. Write draft, send for review, rewrite, and send to Editor before deadline.

### Editor Information

#### FP Announce, *The Sunday News*

Sarah Burns, Office Administrator and Editor

978-369-9602

[sburns@firstparish.org](mailto:sburns@firstparish.org)


#### *Meeting House News (MHN)*

Wendy Wolfberg, Editor

978-578-1077, cell

[wolfberg@post.harvard.edu](mailto:wolfberg@post.harvard.edu) (email preferred)



We are glad to answer any questions. Please review deadlines and guidelines.  
Thank you. 

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## Meeting House Newsletter Deadlines

Issue	Deadline	Publication
Jan	12-Dec-17	20-Dec-17
Feb	16-Jan-18	24-Jan-18
Mar	13-Feb-18	21-Feb-18
Apr	13-Mar-18	22-Mar-18
May	17-Apr-18	25-Apr-18
Jun*	15-May-18	23-May-18
Sep	21-Aug-18	29-Aug-18

\*Include information for June, July, August, and first week of September.

### Questions?

Contact the Editor, Wendy Wolfberg:  
[wolfberg@post.harvard.edu](mailto:wolfberg@post.harvard.edu) or cell  
phone 978-578-1077 (email preferred).  
Thank you!



## General Information

### First Parish General Information

#### Hours

Regular office hours are from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Tuesday through Friday.  
A reminder that the office is closed on Mondays.

#### Contact Us

**Address:** 20 Lexington Road, Concord, MA 01742

**Phone:** 978-369-9602; **Fax:** 978-369-8701

**Email:** [Contact@firstparish.org](mailto:Contact@firstparish.org); **Website:** [www.firstparish.org](http://www.firstparish.org)

**Church Calendar:** <http://firstparish.org/wp/news/calendar/>

**Reserve a Room:** <http://firstparish.org/wp/connection/reserve-a-room/>

**FP Announce:** Sign up for announcements by email: <http://firstparish.org/wp/news/>

**FP Facebook:** "Like" our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/First-Parish-in-Concord-Unitarian-Universalist/343822177494>.

*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.*



# What's This Year for Reflection and Visioning All About?

***A New Practice, Once Every Five Years***

Throughout the 2017-18 church year, the Standing Committee will be actively soliciting input about what you, as members of the congregation, want. What's working? What programs or services might be added? Or improved?

If you were part of First Parish in 2012, you may find this effort similar to work we did with Interim Minister Elaine Perisluha. We reviewed our history in listening sessions, we completed a survey created by the Ministerial Search Committee, and we held a church-wide weekend retreat at Concord-Carlisle High School. This, then, is the second in what we plan to be a regular reassessment, every five years.

## **What You Might Want to Know:**

- Your voice and participation are important to our community.
- Information gathered will help guide the Standing Committee, Senior Minister, and staff in setting goals for our collective future.
- Assessments every five years are common practice among well-functioning non-profit organizations.
- The Senior Minister and Standing Committee agree that a five-year, congregation-wide self-evaluation is a healthy way to ensure regular congregational input.

## **What You Need to Do:**

- **January 2018**—participate in at least one of the 10-12 discussion sessions
- **February 2018**—complete a survey in February
- **March 9-10, 2018**—join us for a second congregational retreat

## **Who to Talk With:**

Feel free to direct any questions to any member of the Standing Committee.

Jeff Brainerd <[jeffbrainerd@gmail.com](mailto:jeffbrainerd@gmail.com)>

Dave Elwood <[daveelwood@hotmail.com](mailto:daveelwood@hotmail.com)>

Kristin Haddad, Chair <[kristin.haddad@gmail.com](mailto:kristin.haddad@gmail.com)>

Peter Nobile, Clerk <[peter.nobile@gmail.com](mailto:peter.nobile@gmail.com)>

Toby Smith Ropeik <[tobyasmith@gmail.com](mailto:tobyasmith@gmail.com)>

Michelle Fortier, Treasurer

Kate Svrcek <[katesvrcek@hotmail.com](mailto:katesvrcek@hotmail.com)>

Lora Venesy <[venesy@comcast.net](mailto:venesy@comcast.net)>

Patty Popov <[ppopov@nichols-pratt.com](mailto:ppopov@nichols-pratt.com)>

Tom Wilson <[twilson@wilsongroup.com](mailto:twilson@wilsongroup.com)>

John Lowe <[john.moore.lowe@gmail.com](mailto:john.moore.lowe@gmail.com)>



# Celebrate!

*Holiday and December Events, Programs and Services for 2017*

*First Parish in Concord*

*See complete details of the holiday events throughout the Meeting House News.*

## **SUNDAY WORSHIP: ADVENT**

"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 3, 10:00 a.m.:** William Grant Still's  
"Christmas in the Western World." First Parish Choir  
and Festival Orchestra

**Sunday, December 10, 10:00 a.m.:** "Love's Incarnation."  
Rev. Howard N. Dana, Contemporary Vocal Ensemble

**Sunday, December 17, 10:00 a.m.:** "Light One Candle –  
Hanukkah." Rev. Howard Dana, First Parish Choir

**Sunday, December 24, 10:00 a.m.; 5:00, 7:00, 9:00 p.m.**

**10:00 a.m.:** "A Time of Wonder and Delight." All ages  
are invited to a special service that will send us  
outdoors together! Bundle up to discover special  
stations around First Parish grounds. We will sing  
joyful carols and find some surprises along our way.  
Our time together will culminate with decorating a  
tree for wildlife and drinking hot cider.

**5:00, 7:00, 9:00 p.m.:** Candlelight Evening Services

**Sunday, December 31, 10:00 a.m.:** "How High Is This  
Mountain?" Rev. Jo Von Rue, Nancy Ackerman, clarinet;  
Eric Huenneke, piano

## **WORSHIP: CHRISTMAS EVE**

**10:00 a.m.** "A Time of Wonder and Delight" with  
caroling and time outdoors (please see above)

### **Evening Services:**

**5:00 p.m.:** Candlelight service, music : Children's Choirs.

**7:00 p.m.:** Candlelight service, music: Gospel Choir

**9:00 p.m.:** Candlelight service, music: First Parish Choir

*Each evening service concludes with candle  
lighting and "Silent Night"*

## **REMEMBER**

The Holiday Memorial Wreath, located at the front of  
the Sanctuary during December, 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. We also invite you to tie a black ribbon on  
the wreath in memory of people of color lost to  
injustice.

## **WORSHIP: BLUE HOLIDAYS VESPERS**

"Find a Stillness"

**Tuesday, December 19, 7:30 p.m. in the Chapel**

Gather in community to find stillness in the midst of all  
that is going on in the world and in your own life. Find  
comfort in the beauty of candles, music and  
understanding. Rev. Marion Visel, Rev. Jo Von Rue, Beth  
Norton and the By Your Side Singers will offer a holiday  
alternative—a quiet space to share reflective words of  
remembrance and solace. 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 3, 3:00 p.m.**

This year's Holiday Concert and Tea, sponsored by the  
Women's Parish Association, will add special sparkle to  
your holiday season. Award-winning classical pianist  
Julia Zhou, a runner-up in a recent Concord Orchestra's  
Young Artist Competition, will be featured. Following  
the concert, enjoy a festive tea. There is no charge for  
this event. Attendees, please bring a plate of sweets to  
share, if you can. Bring family and friends for a joyful  
afternoon! Contact the office at 978-369-9602 or Dian  
Pekin at [pekincd@comcast.net](mailto:pekincd@comcast.net) by December 1 for  
reservations. All are warmly invited.

## **SING**

**"Rise Up Caroling," Friday, December 22, at 7:30 p.m.**

at First Parish. Singers of all ages, please bring voices,  
instruments, and cookies to share. Carol lyrics and sheet  
music for instrumentalists are provided.

## **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 17** 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 3 and 10 services**, or stop by  
the Parish Hall before the services at 9:30 a.m., contact  
Linda Reynolds at [LSmithReynolds@aol.com](mailto:LSmithReynolds@aol.com), or 978-  
371-0562 or leave a note and donation (suggested  
amount \$20) in the office before **December 13**. Your





donation supports the work of the flower committee through the year.

### SHARE

Deliveries of Christmas poinsettias will take place **Tuesday, 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 978-371-3915 or [selle.caitlin5@gmail.com](mailto:selle.caitlin5@gmail.com) to let her know you plan to delivery a plant or two, and meet her in the Sanctuary on Tuesday, December 26 at 10:00 a.m.

### CREATE

**Saturday, December 2, from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.**

First Parish children are invited to spend the afternoon creating beautiful handmade gifts for the holidays, with the help of an intergenerational community of adult and teen helper elves. Cost: \$15 per child, max \$45 per family, no RSVP needed. To see what volunteer spots we have open, contact 978-254-5037, [craftsworkshop@firstparish.org](mailto:craftsworkshop@firstparish.org), or one of the Head Elves: Kimberly Brainerd, Dave Elwood, Kristin Moore, and Jeanne Williams.

### DELIGHT

The Little Angels Choir (preschool through first grade) will share their song of hope on **Sunday, December 10**. 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 year, our angels will be led in song by Paul Benzaquin. Thanks to Dawn Van Patten for coordinating this lovely tradition.

### GATHER

#### **Christmas Caroling**

Come help bring holiday cheer to our parishioners and others who can't get out this season. Singers of all ages wanted! We will meet in the Parlor at First Parish on **Saturday, December 16, at 1:00 p.m.**, and carpool to area nursing facilities to sing. Afterward, we'll head back to First Parish to enjoy cookies and hot chocolate together. Please feel free to wear festive attire and bring cookies to share. For more information, please contact Lora Venesy at 978-254-5433 or [venesy@comcast.net](mailto:venesy@comcast.net).

### SERVE

#### **Secret Santa**

43 individuals from Renewal House, Walden School, and Eliot Center were on the list to receive Secret Santa gifts. Amazingly, all of those names were taken last week. Your generosity is astounding! You can still contribute in the following ways: select one of the few new names that arrived this week, donate gift cards (\$25-\$50 – Visa, Walmart, Target, TJ Maxx, Marshalls, Macys), divide a wish list with another person (some of the lists are too much for one person), donate twin foam mattress pad toppers, Ipods, or portable DVD

players to Walden School, or donate your used, refurbished laptop for students. Contact Jen Izzo at [jbizzo@hotmail.com](mailto:jbizzo@hotmail.com) to make a difference this holiday season. These gifts really matter to those receiving them. AWE will be collecting unwrapped, marked gifts and gift cards during coffee hour on **Sunday, December 3 and December 10**.

### INVITE

During the holiday season, 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. This practice reminds us of our blessings and the importance of sharing. If you did receive a box in worship on November 19, please pick up one from the church office after Thanksgiving. Please return your box to First Parish by Sunday, **December 17**, so our 5th graders may count our contributions.

### REVEL

#### **Winter Solstice Celebration**

Come one, come all, to celebrate the Winter Solstice with stories, songs, blazing Yule log, a spiral dance, seasonal refreshments, and more! The Women's Goddess Covenant Circle invites the entire First Parish community with families and friends to join us at this festive gathering on **Wednesday, December 20, at 7:00 p.m.** in the Parlor. Questions? Contact Darien Smith at [darien@smithquest.com](mailto:darien@smithquest.com).

### CELEBRATE

#### **Three Kings Day with Santuario Luterano**

Join Zach Roe and members of First Parish as we visit Santuario Luterano in Waltham for the celebration of Día de los Tres Reyes (Three Kings Day) on Sunday, January 7. Día de los Tres Reyes celebrates the arrival of the three kings from the biblical story of the nativity. There will be homemade Puerto Rican food, decorating of boxes for the youth, passing out gifts and sweets, and the Three Kings will be making an appearance as well! Santuario Luterano is a Spanish speaking Lutheran congregation led by the Rev. Ángel Marrero, who is Zach's husband. Space is limited, so please reserve a spot by RSVPing on the First Parish in Concord—Social Action Community page on Facebook ([facebook.com/fpcsac](https://facebook.com/fpcsac)), or contact Zach directly at [zroe@firstparish.org](mailto:zroe@firstparish.org).

