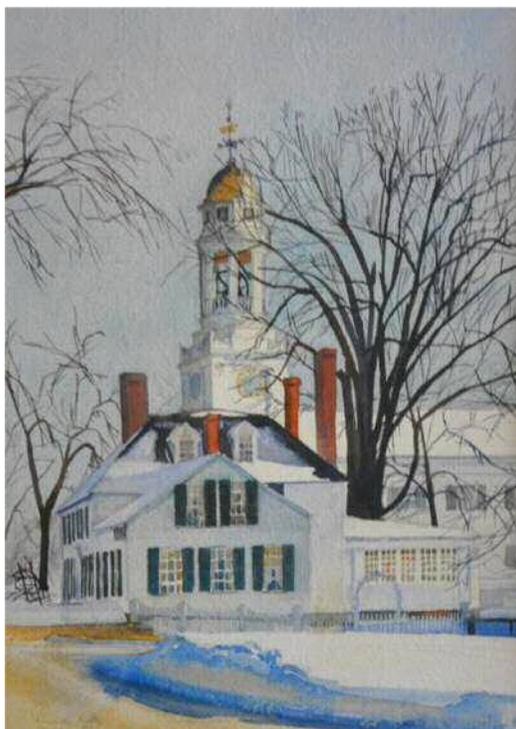




What's Happening at First Parish?

MEETING HOUSE NEWS

MARCH 2018



Painting by Russell Smith

Next Meeting House News

DEADLINE: MARCH 13, 2018

PUBLICATION: MARCH 22, 2018

MHN dates through February
2019 now available on Page 26.

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Photo by Douglas R. Baker



IMPORTANT

***A Year for
Reflection and
Visioning***

A New Practice, Once Every Five Years

Read more on Pages 5 and 15. Handout available at end of Newsletter.

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Worship at First Parish

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

Services at-a-Glance

Sunday, March 4 – “Give Love - Celebration Sunday”

Rev. Howard N. Dana
Combined First Parish Choirs

Sunday, March 11 – “Why Do We Pray for Other People?”

Rev. Howard N. Dana
First Parish Choir

Sunday, March 18 – “First, You Have to Believe”

Rev. Jo VonRue
First Parish Choir

Sunday, March 25 – “Early Christian Peculiarities”

Rev. Howard N. Dana
First Parish Choir

Thursday, March 29 – Maundy Thursday

Service at 11:00 a.m.

Followed by a Fish Chowder Luncheon
Rev. Howard N. Dana
First Parish Choir

Friday, March 30 – Good Friday

Service at 7:00 p.m.

Rev. Howard N. Dana

Sunday, April 1 – Easter Sunday

Note: Services at Both 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Rev. Howard N. Dana
First Parish Choir and Festival Brass



Celebration Sunday

**2018-2019 Annual Pledge Campaign
Kickoff, Sunday, March 4**

“Give love . . . and people will find a way” is the theme for this year’s Annual Pledge Campaign. Join us March 4 and pledge toward the 2018-2019 Annual Pledge Campaign. Read more about [Celebration Sunday](#) on page 13.

First Parish Café

The First Parish Café opens on Sundays at 9:00 a.m. Come to the Parish Hall and enjoy the fellowship and light fare before the service.



Red Mugs at Coffee Hour



Until recently, new attendees or new members were encouraged to pick up a red mug when heading for coffee hour in the hopes that seasoned parishioners would notice the red mug and engage, welcoming them. The Membership Committee thought it helpful to reverse the process. The goal is to invite interactions among our congregational community. Now, the person holding a red mug, eager and willing to engage in conversation, answer questions, or provide information will, most likely but not always, be a member of the Membership Committee.

It was felt that often a new person might have been a bit uncomfortable taking the first step, resulting in a missed opportunity to connect with others in the congregation. We hope this new approach will promote and encourage many new conversations and relationships among our growing congregation. If you see a “lost” look at coffee hour, do introduce yourself and feel free to escort a new person to a committee member—the one now holding a red mug.—Karen Sullivan, Membership Committee

Passover Seder

Saturday, April 7, 5:00 p.m., Parish Hall



The Passover Seder is an ancient celebration of freedom. Rev. Amy Freedman, our Minister of Religious Education, is leading our service. The Parish Hall becomes our family dining room. Whether you have a Jewish background or never attended a Seder before, you are welcome! This Cooperative Seder is a fun and meaningful ritual for all ages to eat, tell the Passover story, and reflect on our lives together.

Get tickets and sign up to help at coffee hour on Sundays March 11, 18, and 25. Questions? Email Amy at afreedman@firstparish.org; or call Dana Snyder-Grant, cell phone 978-760-1129.

World Day of Prayer

**Service and Luncheon, Friday, March 2, Service 11:00 a.m., Luncheon 12:00 p.m.
Reservations: Not required**

World Day of Prayer occurs internationally on the first Friday of March every year. The host church this year will be the West Concord Union Church, West Concord. All are warmly invited. For more information, please see [Page 21](#).



Dust Off Those *Messiah* Scores

Easter is coming!

Singers from the congregation are invited to come to the choir loft during the final hymn on Easter Sunday, April 1, and join the choir, organ, and brass in our traditional Easter postlude, G. F. Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus." If you have a copy of the *Messiah*, you are welcome to bring it with you. If not, there will be some extra music available, and choir members are always willing to share. We will sing at the end of both the 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. services.

Even if you don't wish to make the climb (or take the elevator) to the balcony, feel free to join in this joyous chorus on Easter morning.

Sunday Forums

11:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary

March 18 — "Ranked Choice Voting"

Last November, Maine became the first state in U.S. history to pass a voting system called Ranked Choice Voting (RCV), which could transform politics in America. Instead of choosing just one candidate on your ballot, RCV allows you to rank multiple candidates in the order you prefer, allowing a gradation in the outcome that guarantees the candidate with the best overall support wins the race in a crowded field, and virtually eliminates the need for any runoff election. Eleven major cities in the United States already use RCV, including Cambridge, Massachusetts. Mr. Jim Henderson of [Voter Choice Massachusetts](http://VoterChoiceMassachusetts.com) will be our speaker.



To suggest a topic or speaker, join the Forum Committee; or to get emails about future Sunday Forums, contact a Forum Committee cochair: Pat Brinkman, pabrinkman@comcast.net; or Alan Whitney, awhitney@alum.mit.edu.

Thank you for your continued support.

Year for Reflection and Visioning

Every 5 years! The Grand Finale!

- ✓ Listening Sessions? Done.
- ✓ Congregational Survey? Done!

All your thoughts and input come together March 9-10 at our All-Congregation Retreat! Don't forget to sign up!



The Standing Committee is planning an engaging, thoughtful, and stimulating program for everyone 13 years and older, where together we begin building the First Parish community we want for 2023. We'll provide child care and activities for younger children.

Continued next page.

All-Congregation Retreat

1. Friday, March 9, 6:00 p.m.

Come share a potluck dinner and engage in community building activities, with the option to dance afterward, courtesy of the Immigration Justice Task Force.

2. Saturday, March 10, 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

- 8:30 a.m.—light breakfast.
- 9:00 a.m.—we'll unveil the results of our congregational survey.
- Parishioners Jim Sherblom and Jim Tull will lead an interactive workshop on compassionate communication, problem solving, and conflict resolution. [Jim Tull](#), provides training and process assistance in the areas of negotiation and dispute resolution as a partner with CMPartners. Rev. [Jim Sherblom](#), former CEO of TSI Corporation and venture capitalist, is an author and recently retired Senior Minister at First Parish in Brookline.
- We'll begin generating ideas around building stronger relationships and fully living our UU values within community.

Planning to Come? Don't forget to sign up!

Please [sign up](#) for the retreat at <https://tinyurl.com/y7wujo7x>.

Please NOTE: Saturday's lunch will be a true [stone soup](#) community meal. Please bring something to contribute (i.e. onions, garlic, carrots, kale, turnip, cauliflower, squash, parsley, roast chicken, cooked sausage, canned beans, broth, pasta, etc.). Please have your contribution **cut up and ready to add**. We'll have a separate pot that will be gluten-free, nut-free, and vegan—so please label your contribution appropriately. We'll also serve salad and bread.

Questions?

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

Jeff Brainerd, jeffbrainerd@gmail.com

Kate Svrcek, katesvrcek@hotmail.com

Dave Elwood, daveelwood@hotmail.com

Lora Venesy, venesy@comcast.net

Kristin Haddad, chair, kristin.haddad@gmail.com

Patty Popov, ppopov@nichols-pratt.com

Peter Nobile, clerk, peter.nobile@gmail.com

Tom Wilson, twilson@wilsongroup.com

Toby Smith Ropeik, tobyasmith@gmail.com

John Lowe, john.moore.lowe@gmail.com

Michelle Fortier, Treasurer

A handout on this important initiative is also available at the end of this newsletter. Please see the December *MHN* for additional background information.

Religious Exploration (RE) News

Reflection on Love

By the Neighboring Faiths Class (Grade 7)

Delivered during the service at First Parish, Sunday, February 11

Teaching Team: Jan Powers, Jan Goddard-Taylor, and Kristin Haddad



In Neighboring Faiths, we are learning about other religions and their beliefs. We are also visiting their houses of worship and reading some of their sacred texts.

So far, we have learned about earth-based religions, Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Catholicism, Islam, Baptists, and Quakerism. In a recent class, we talked about what these religions have to say about love. We found that these religions define love in ways that are not found in our popular culture.

- ♥ **Hinduism** – teaches about devotional love for Brahma. This kind of love means making regular sacrifices and offerings. Showing love to other people is the same as showing love to God.
- ♥ **Judaism** – the sacred text, The Tanakh, says we should love our neighbors as ourselves.
- ♥ **Islam** – one of the five pillars of Islam is charitable giving, which can be an act of love. Muslims are expected to give a certain percentage of their income to the needy. This kind of giving is like pruning a plant—it restores balance and encourages growth, just like love should.
- ♥ **Baptists** – on our visit to a Baptist church in Cambridge, we received a lot of love from people who came over to hug us and shake our hands and warmly welcome us to their church service.
- ♥ **Quakers** – believe that everyone has the divine inside them. Therefore, they believe that everyone is deserving of kindness, respect, and justice. We agreed that this is a loving way to treat others.
- ♥ **Christian** – the Christian Bible has a passage in the New Testament that gives a definition of what love is and is not. It says that love IS patient, kind, selfless, and unwavering. Love protects, trusts, and hopes. Love is NOT rude or jealous, and it is not boastful.

Continued next page.

After we looked at what other religions had to say about love, we asked ourselves, “Is taking part in Neighboring Faiths an act of love?” And we decided that it is.

It is an act of love to go meet strangers. And it is an act of love to take the time to visit these other houses of worship. By learning about other people’s beliefs and by going to visit them, we are living our benediction: We are going out into the world in peace. And we are learning to honor all beings. And those are some of the ways that Unitarian Universalists show love.

Religious Exploration

Day, Date, Time	Theme	Description
Sunday, March 4 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Celebration Sunday	Begin in Service, Special Activity in Parish Hall
Sunday, March 11 10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.	“Animals around the World”- Creature Teachers	Multiage Program (K-4)
Sunday, March 18 10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.	“Finding Balance”	Religious Exploration
Sunday, March 25 10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.	Easter Egg Decorating (Please bring one dozen hard-boiled eggs)	Religious Exploration



Discover More

Discover more at <http://firstparish.org/wp/learning/re/>. If you have questions about our programs for children and youth, please contact Dawn Van Patten, Assistant Director of Religious Education, dvanpatten@firstparish.org; or Rev. Amy Freedman, Minister of Religious Education, afreedman@firstparish.org.

Youth Group



Youth Service

**Learning Trip to City Reach
Friday and Saturday, April 27 to 28**

If you are a teen in grades 9 to 12, join us for a learning service trip to *City Reach* in Boston. City Reach is an organization that supports those that are experiencing homelessness in Boston. Cost is \$70. Spots are filling fast, so please be in touch soon if this is something you are interested in doing.



Continued next page.



Youth CON

Friday, May 11, 6:00 p.m. to Saturday, May 12, 6:00 p.m.

If you are a teen in grades 9 to 12, join us in May for a 24-hour *Youth CON* at the UU Church in Belmont. A great way to connect with other teens in our UU world! The theme will be social justice as it relates to mass incarceration. Cost will be around \$40.

Learning Service

Trip to Puerto Rico

Fall 2018

Teens and parents of teens, please keep an eye out for a letter detailing a possible fall learning service trip to Puerto Rico.

Youth Group Meetings

Sundays, March 11 and 25, 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

If you are a teen in grades 9 to 12, join us for youth group on Sunday evenings in March. We are currently working on some social justice projects and will be looking ahead to our trip to City Reach in April. Pizza dinner is provided.

If you are interested in any of these events, please contact Jo VonRue at jvonrue@firstparish.org or 978-369-9602, ext. 412.

Pastoral Care

Walking with One Another through the Changes Life Brings

Ministers

Minister for Pastoral Care, Rev. Marion Visel

Email: mvisel@firstparish.org

Church: 978-369-9602, ext. 414

Cell: 203-931-5239



Senior Minister, Rev. Howard N. Dana

Email: hdana@firstparish.org

Church: 978-369-9602, ext. 411

Cell: 717-412-8543

Minister in Residence, Rev. Jo VonRue

Email: jvonrue@firstparish.org

Church: 978-369-9602, ext. 412

Cell: 570-899-0457



March Pastoral Care Lay Minister, Sue Dobbie

Email: susandobbie@gmail.com

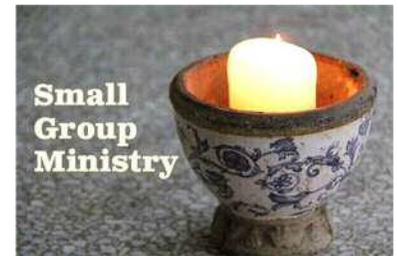
Cell: 978-501-6969

SMG Forming

Small Group Ministry Groups Forming

Mindful Matters

Have you wondered what mindfulness really means? Does your mind feel too busy like the rest of your life? Have you ever noticed that your mind judges or can be harsh and wondered if you could benefit from some simple meditation? Are you curious to explore how mindfulness, loving kindness, acceptance and letting go might be related? Come explore these mindful matters and how they might relate to your daily life. There will be a short meditation at the beginning of each session.



- ♥ **When:** Wednesday mornings, 10:00 a.m. - noon, Brooks Room
- ♥ **Dates:** four sessions—March 7, March 21, April 11, April 25
- ♥ **Facilitators:** Francie Nolde and Dana Snyder-Grant
- ♥ **Sign-up:** On the clipboard in the front office, or contact Marion Visel at mvisel@firstparish.org or 203-931-5239 (cell)

Life's Passages

People are taking longer to grow up and much longer to die. The old demarcations and descriptions of adulthood are out of date. How are we to make sense of and integrate life's passages as we move from transition to transition? This group will explore our past, present, and future: who we were as children, young adults, in mid-life and as seniors.

- ♥ **When:** First and third Tuesday evenings, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m., Brooks Room
- ♥ **Dates:** Four sessions—March 6, March 20, April 3, April 17
- ♥ **Facilitator:** Mary-Wren vanderWilden
- ♥ **Sign-up:** On the clipboard in the front office, or contact Marion Visel at mvisel@firstparish.org or 203-931-5239 (cell)

Spiritual Enrichment Program

Photography as Meditation

Explore photography as a form of meditation practice through accessible contemplative photography and centering/meditation exercises. No experience required except knowing how to use your camera or smart phone. Bring your camera/phone to each session.

- ♥ **When:** First and third Tuesday evenings, 1:30 - 3:30 p.m., Brooks Room
- ♥ **Dates:** Four sessions—April 2, 9, 16, 23 (Monday afternoons)
- ♥ **Facilitator:** Rev. Marion Visel
- ♥ **Sign-up:** On the clipboard in the front office, or contact Marion Visel at mvisel@firstparish.org or 203-931-5239 (cell)

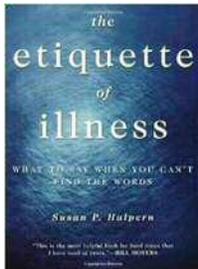
NOTE: The *Photography as Meditation* group is limited to 14; preference is given to those who will attend all four sessions.



Pastoral Care Library

New Books

Here are short descriptions (thanks again to Amazon) of two more of the new books in the Pastoral Care Library. If you read them, we'd love to hear how you liked them. Email your opinion to Enid Boasberg at harpplayer@comcast.net.

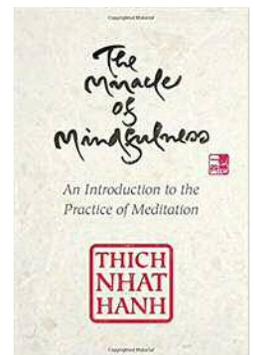


The Etiquette of Illness: what to say when you can't find the words by Susan Halpern

What should I say when I hear that my friend has cancer? How can I help but not get in the way? How do I let my loved ones know what I need? The Etiquette of Illness is a wise, encouraging, and essential guide to navigating the complex terrain of illness. This collection of anecdotes and insights will help those who feel awkward and unsure about responding to a friend, colleague, relative or child who is suffering.

The Miracle of Mindfulness by Thich Nhat Hanh

This is a classic guide to meditation that has introduced generations of readers to the life-changing beauty of mindful awareness. Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh offers gentle anecdotes and practical exercise as a means of learning the skills of mindfulness. From washing the dishes to answering the phone to peeling an orange, he reminds us that each moment holds within it an opportunity to work toward greater self-understanding and peacefulness.



MUUsings

Even after all these years serving as a UU music leader, I find there is still so much to learn! This is one of the things I love about my work.

In March, the choir will be exploring some choral repertoire and texts from the Jewish tradition that will be new to us. I found these pieces in a creative, collaborative worship planning process with my colleagues in ministry.

One of the pieces we'll be singing is the beautiful and devastating *Ani ma'amin*, an ancient Hebrew affirmation of faith that can be translated, in part, "I believe in God, in a greater truth and in things greater than this world in spite of all that has happened . . ." The Hebrew text is based on a medieval formulation of the 13 basic tenets of Judaism. The song is said to have been sung during the Holocaust as Jews entered the gas chambers, proclaiming their faith even to their last breath. I was familiar with several beautiful English adaptations of this haunting text, including one by Mark Miller, which we will be singing at Jo VonRue's request: "I believe in the sun, even when it's not shining . . ." But my explorations of this text, prompted by Jo's request, led to an even deeper understanding of its origins and the depth of faith that it truly expresses.

Continued next page.

The other discovery I have made in recent musical and historical explorations was prompted by a worship team discussion about traditional texts for Passover. As a non-Jew, I was not familiar until just recently with the “Hallel Psalms,” numbers 113 to 118, psalms of praise that are chanted at Passover as well as at other festivals, both Jewish and Christian. That sent me back to a fascinating setting of Psalm 114, which celebrates the Jews’ exodus from Egypt. In this arrangement, the Psalm verses are sung in alternation, first in Hebrew, to an ancient Sephardic melody, and then in Latin, to a Gregorian chant. The Sephardic and Gregorian melodies are curiously similar, suggesting that they could have had a common origin in the ancient Temple in Jerusalem, before the Christian and Jewish faiths diverged. I love discovering these ancient connections.



The Jewish and Christian traditions are important sources of our Unitarian Universalist tradition. As I deepen my understanding of their shared history, I feel a deeper grounding in my own, chosen faith.

Blessings, Beth
Beth Norton, Director of Music
Contact at music@firstparish.org or 978-369-9602

Minister in Residence

Over these past few months I have been struggling with knowing my place in the world, wondering if I will leave some kind of mark or make a difference. I came across this poem today by one of my professors that reminded me that I really need to stop worrying about all the grand paths my life may or may not take. That instead I need to focus on the life that is right in front of me, to take time for joy and laughter, love, and holding hands. I hope this poem inspires you to become more aware of your today and less worried about your tomorrow.

Let Me Die Laughing

We are all dying, our lives always moving toward completion.
We need to learn to live with death, and to understand that death is not the words of all events.

We need to fear not death but life—
empty lives,

loveless lives,

lives that do not build upon the gifts that each of us has been given,

lives that are like living deaths,

lives which we never take the time to savor and appreciate,

lives in which we never pause to breathe deeply.

What we need to fear is not death, but squandering the lives we have been miraculously given.

Continued next page.

So let me die laughing, savoring one of life's crazy moments. Let me die holding the hand of one I love, and recalling that I tried to love and was loved in return. Let me die remembering that life has been good, and that I did what I could. But today, just remind me that I am dying so that I can live, savor, and love with all my heart.



—Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed

Blessed be, my loves, Jo
Rev. Jennifer "Jo" VonRue
Minister in Residence
jvonrue@firstparish.org or 978-369-9602, ext. 412

Fundraising and Stewardship

Call for Auction Donations

Auction: Saturday, October 27

Need some ideas of what to donate to help make the Auction a huge success? Here are a few. When out for lunch or dinner on your birthday, pick up a gift certificate to the restaurant. Buy an extra toy at that special sale. Sew or knit something while there is still time. When on summer vacation in a fun boutique, buy that "darling something" you stumble upon. We want this Auction to be bigger and better than ever! Any questions? Please contact Dyan Urban at dyanurban@gmail.com.



Celebration Sunday

2018-2019 Annual Pledge Campaign

Kickoff, Sunday, March 4



"Give love . . . and people will find a way" is the theme for this year's Annual Pledge Campaign. We give love to each other at First Parish through our participation and our gifts. Celebration Sunday is a special service to honor all we accomplish by giving generously to First Parish.

Join us March 4 and pledge toward the 2018-2019 Annual Pledge Campaign. Pledge cards and envelopes will be available, and cake at coffee hour is part of the celebration!

For more information, contact Jane Barnes, janebarnes@gmail.com, project manager for the 2018-2019 Annual Pledge Campaign.

Legacy Giving

How much should I leave to First Parish?



Any amount is greatly appreciated. If you want to think about this, start with your annual pledge. Let's say it's \$2,000. The Trustees provide First Parish approximately 4% of the rolling year-end average assets from the Legacy Investment Fund. Therefore, if you divide your pledge by 4% ($\$2,000 \div 0.04 = \$50,000$), you can assure your pledge *will live on forever*. Of course, you may increase or decrease this based on your preferences. Your legacy will ensure your pledge to First Parish lives forever. Just an idea. Think about it. Thank you. The Legacy Giving Committee

Can You Serve?

Future Standing Committee Members Needed



The Nominating Committee would like to know if you are interested in serving on the Standing Committee in the future! Standing Committee members serve on the governing board of First Parish in partnership with the minister, staff, and congregation. The Standing Committee establishes the policies by which our church operates.

Candidates must be members of First Parish and should have interest and experience in such matters as governance, operations, finance, committees, or other parts of church life. You can find out more about the Standing Committee and the Nominating Committee on the First Parish website. If interested, please email Eric Moore at eric.aaron.moore@gmail.com.

Pot o' Gold Potluck

Saturday, March 17, 6:00-8:00 p.m., Parish Hall



Everyone in the First Parish community is cordially invited to a "Pot o' Gold Potluck" dinner on St. Patrick's Day, sponsored by the Annual Pledge Campaign Team. This will be family friendly and a true potluck. Please join us and bring an appetizer, main dish, side dish, salad, or dessert to share. Soft drinks will be provided, but feel free to bring your own wine or beer. Contact is Michelle Fortier, mfortierhome@gmail.com or 617-875-8915 (cell).

Standing Committee News

Next Meeting: Sunday, March 11, 6:00 p.m., Emerson Room

Meeting Summary

On February 11, the Standing Committee met in the Emerson Room. In addition to our regular business, we discussed plans for the March 10 retreat that will conclude our “Year for Reflection and Visioning.” We also reviewed an updated Standing Committee Operations Policy and heard about the new Annual Pledge Fund guidelines for the UUA. Minutes from our meetings are regularly posted on the [SC website page](#).



Year for Reflection and Visioning

During our monthly meeting, it was noted that 150 people participated in our January listening sessions, and that about 100 surveys were completed in the first week it was available. Thank you! This input will help us to organize our congregation-wide retreat the weekend of March 10. Please watch FPAnnounce, the *Sunday News*, and the website for information on this retreat.

7.5% SAC Policy Update

The congregational survey that was open from February 2 through February 20 includes a specific question about the current policy that reserves 7.5% of the total pledge income to “social action purposes.” Once the results are in, this information, combined with the information from our fall listening sessions, will be used by the Standing Committee to draft a recommended policy. This policy will be presented to the SAC board in March. A presentation on the policy recommendation will be offered to the full congregation at the end of April, allowing for discussion before our Annual Meeting. Details on this April conversation will be publicized next month. Stay tuned!

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. You can find the contact information for each Standing Committee member, along with meeting agendas, governing policies, meeting minutes, and reports on the First Parish website [here](#).



Best Regards,
Kristin Coffman Haddad, chair, Standing Committee
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 in the upcoming month that offer opportunities to participate in the ministry of the arts at First Parish. Unless otherwise noted, questions may be directed to music@firstparish.org.



Upcoming Events

Day	Date	Time	Events
Friday	March 2	7:00 p.m.	AWE Movie Night, "He Named Me Malala," Chapel
Saturday	March 3	9:30 a.m.	First Parish Photography Club (open to all First Parish adults)
Saturday	March 3	7:00 p.m.	Film "Beneath the Surface," Partner Church Council
Friday	March 9	6:00 p.m.	Immigration Task Force Dance Party
Wednesday	March 14	6:30 p.m.	Arts Council Meeting (all welcome)
Friday	March 23	7:30 p.m.	Rise Up Singing!—a monthly open folk song circle
Friday	April 6	TBA	LUNAFEST, Concord Academy's state-of-the-art theater

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

The purpose of the First Parish Arts Council is to further the mission of First Parish through facilitating, promoting, and coordinating a diverse arts ministry that inspires and celebrates creativity and connection. The council is open to all interested parishioners.

Curator's Corner

What's on the Walls?



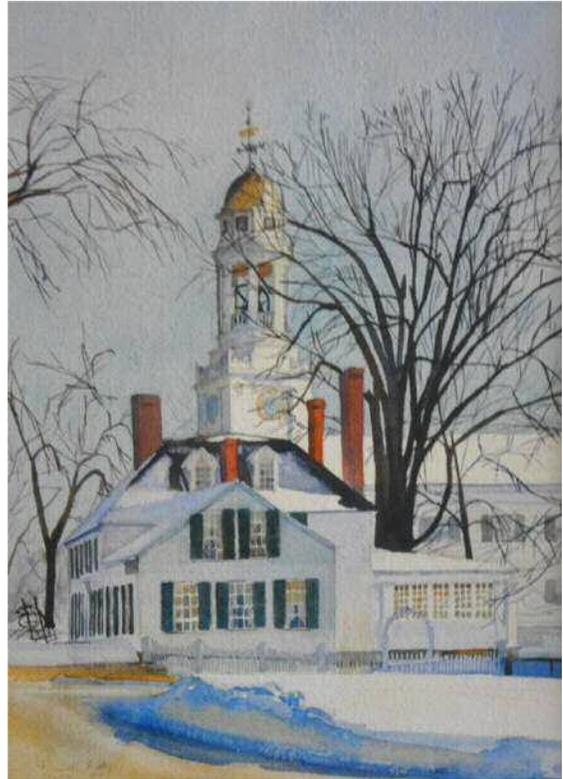
Our history series on First Parish artifacts continues with a look at a few of the lovely objects that grace our walls. Have you noticed these paintings (below)? Spend a little time with these paintings and drink them in. Our tireless Curator and Sexton, Douglas R. Baker, shares some insights on these pieces.

The first painting (below) is a watercolor painted by Russell Smith in 1931. Russell Smith was an instructor at the Museum School and the uncle of longtime parishioner and contributor to *The Meeting House on the Green*, Eric Parkman Smith. Notice that both the Wright Tavern and the Meeting House were painted white.

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The painting of the ladies sewing is one of a pair of paintings done by Elizabeth Wentworth Roberts. Both paintings were painted in the Parish Hall of First Parish. One is titled "Concord Women Sewing for the War Sufferers, 1915," and the second painting is titled "Concord Women Sewing for the Belgium Refugees, 1913." Ms. Roberts was the founder of the Concord Art Association, having studied art in Pennsylvania, Paris, and Florence.

Douglas Baker, Curator and Sexton. Contact: dbaker@firstparish.org or 978-369-9602.



Social Action Community

Faith into Action

Children and Homelessness

Sunday March 18, 3:00-5:00 p.m., Sanctuary and Parish Hall

The Advocacy Network to End Family Homelessness presents "Children Caught in Family Homelessness, How They Are Hurt and How We Can Help."



Continued next page.

Hear from experts about life for families struggling to find housing, the long-term implications for children, and how to actively engage in advocacy that supports important programs. Speakers include Dr. Megan Sandel, Associate Director of the GROW Clinic at Boston Medical Center and Principal Investigator with Children's Health Watch; Carl Howell, Division Director of Housing and Homeless Services for Community Teamwork in Lowell; and Kelly Turley, Associate Director, Mass Coalition for the Homeless. Q&A, refreshments, information tables, and a special thank-you to Cory Atkins follow. Contact: jane_blumberg@me.com.



Learn About True Islam

Wednesday, March 7, from 8:00 to 9:30 a.m.

Registration deadline: February 27. Breakfast provided.

Save the Date! Join Concord resident Nasir Rana and members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community to learn about True Islam: what it is and how to counter ignorance about the world's second largest religion. This is a joint project of First Parish in Concord, the Concord-Carlisle Adult and Community Education, the Human Rights Council, and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of Sharon, Massachusetts. Once registration is open, you can register [here](#).

Partner Congregation News

Documentary Fundraiser

Saturday, March 3, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m., Parish Hall

This April, 27 pilgrims from First Parish will travel to Transylvania to visit our partner congregation in Székelykeresztúr. To benefit the Pilgrimage Assistance Fund, the PCC will show the documentary "Beneath the Surface," with a suggested donation of \$20. This moving film tells the story of the diverse and tolerant village, Bözödújfalú, which was intentionally flooded and destroyed during the reign of Ceausescu. We will also offer Hungarian items and foods for silent auction and raffle at the event and at coffee hour. Contact Rodger Mattlage, rmattlage@mac.com.



SAC Calendar

Keep an eye out for more through FP Announce, the *Sunday News* insert, and our [Facebook page!](#) For more events, you can also check out our SAC Calendar on the church bulletin board or on the door to my office (the Loft).



In peace and hope,
Zach

Zachary Roe
Social Action Coordinator
zroe@firstparish.org, 978-369-9602, ext.450

Women's News



AWE Upcoming Events

Advocates for Women's Empowerment

- **Film Series:** Friday, March 2, 7:00 p.m., Chapel
- **Book Group:** Tuesday, March 6, 7:00 p.m., Brooks Room
- **LUNAFEST:** Friday, April 6, Concord Academy
- **Nobel Peace Prize Speaker:** Sunday, April 8, First Parish
- **Toiletry Drive:** Month of April
- **Next Meeting:** Saturday, March 17, 8:00 a.m., First Parish

Free Feminist Film Series

We'll show "He Named Me Malala." After the Taliban tries to kill her for speaking out on behalf of girls' education, Pakistani teenager Malala Yousafzai emerges as a leading advocate for children's rights and the youngest-ever Nobel Peace Prize Laureate.

Contact: Lou Toussaint at mloutoussaint@gmail.com.

Book Group

Goodreads writes: "An intimate portrait of a family and an epic tale of hope and struggle, *Sing, Unburied, Sing*, by Jesmyn Ward, examines the ugly truths at the heart of the American story, and the power and limitations of family bonds." Contact: Jen Izzo at

jbizzo@hotmail.com.

LUNAFEST

Save the date for our fifth fundraising film festival event co-sponsored with Concord Academy in their state-of-the-art theater. Proceeds benefit a women's health/reproductive health nonprofit. Watch for details! To help, contact Lora Venesy at venesy@comcast.net.





Tawakkol Karman, Nobel Peace Prize Speaker

Save the date, Sunday, April 8, to hear Tawakkol Karman, a Nobel Peace Prize women’s rights and peace activist. Watch for details!

Toiletry Drive for Rosie’s Place and Open Table

Save unopened full- and travel-size toiletries and feminine hygiene products for our collection drive in April. Watch for details. *Thank you to the volunteers* who donated their time and great energy to cooking and serving dinner at Rosie’s Place on February 11.



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.

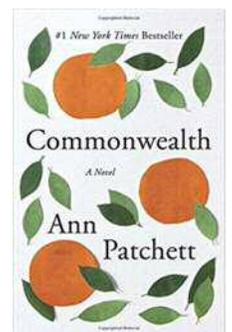
Women’s AM/PM Book Group

Monday, March 26, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m., Brooks Room

Tuesday, March 27, 9:30 to 11:00 a.m., Brooks Room

The March book for discussion is the novel *Commonwealth*, by Ann Patchett. All women of First Parish are warmly invited to read the book and join a discussion. There’s no need to sign up!

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



Continued next page.

Dates and Books for 2018

Date	Book	Author
March 26/27	<i>Commonwealth</i>	Ann Patchett
April 23/24	<i>America's First Daughter</i>	Stephanie Dray and Laura Kamoie
May 21/22	<i>Necessary Lies</i>	Diane Chamberlain

Women's Parish Association

World Day of Prayer

Service and Luncheon

Friday, March 2, Service 11:00 a.m., Luncheon 12:00 p.m.

Reservations: Not required

World Day of Prayer occurs internationally on the first Friday of March every year. The host church for this year's Concord commemoration will be the West Concord Union Church at 1317 Main Street, West Concord.

Women of Suriname wrote the service based on the creation story. It will explore issues of climate change, natural disasters, pollution, and human abuse of the environment, which are harming our planet and its inhabitants.

If you have artwork, textiles, or decorative items from Suriname to lend for use in the service or luncheon, please contact Dian Pekin at pekindc@comcast.net.

All men, women, and youth are warmly invited.

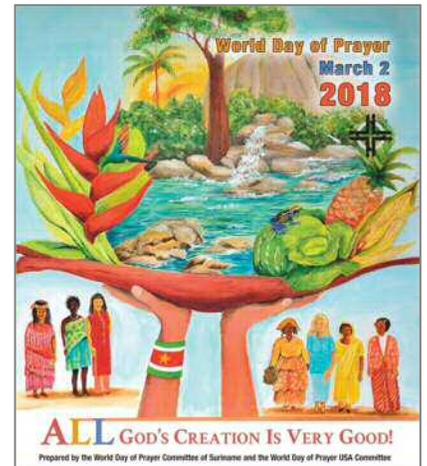
WPA Luncheon

Program: "A Compelling Look at Inspiring Resistance"

Wednesday, March 21, 11:30 a.m.

Reservations by March 17

Join old and new friends at a special luncheon program organized by the Women's Parish Association. Fellow parishioner Prof. Shelley Hawks will give an illustrated presentation about her recently published book, *The Art of Resistance, Painting by Candlelight in Mao's China*. Her findings present a very powerful picture of what dedicated resisters against oppression can accomplish. In addition to giving a very interesting understanding of aspects of Chinese art and culture, her book provides inspiration to resisters today who know well that resistance against tyranny and oppression are crucial to protecting a democracy. A book signing will follow the program.



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For reservations, contact the office at 978-369-9602 or Dian Pekin at pekindc@comcast.net.

Flea Market

Saturday, April 28, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Parish Hall and Parlor

It's not too early to start setting aside items that you want to donate to this great fundraiser. Household items, gift items, collectibles, antiques, jewelry, toys, etc.—all in good condition—are most welcome.



If you want to rent a table (fee is \$35) or to let us know what you are planning to donate, contact the church office at 978-369-9602 or Dian Pekin at pekindc@comcast.net. Tables are going fast, so rent one soon!

Other Cool Stuff

Amnesty International, Group 15

Next meeting: Tuesday, March 20, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., Greeley Room

Save the date: April 26, Sister Helen Prejean



First on the agenda is signing letters to support human rights activists determined by Amnesty/USA to be “urgent” cases. We’ll have progress reports on our plans for April 26, when Sister Helen Prejean will speak in Concord. Ongoing projects include Massachusetts prison reform, death penalty abolition, the prevention of violence against women worldwide, and the freeing of two Azerbaijanian student activists.

All are welcome to join us. For more information, contact Nancy Lyons, njlyons22@gmail.com or 978-369-6109.

Concord Area Humanists

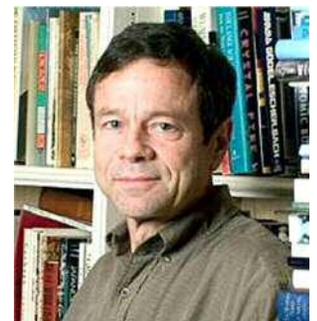
First Wednesdays, 7:00 p.m., Parish Hall

March 7 – Alan Lightman

“Fact and Faith”

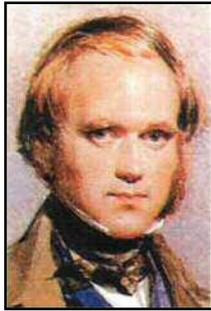
Alan Lightman discusses differences between scientific and religious beliefs, how they are formed, and their different evidentiary bases.

Central to spiritual beliefs is the personal “transcendent experience,” which supports subsequent belief. Most scientific beliefs are founded upon objective data from the external world. Science and religion differ profoundly in the process of revision: all scientific knowledge is considered provisional. Lightman is a writer and physicist who has taught at Harvard and MIT.

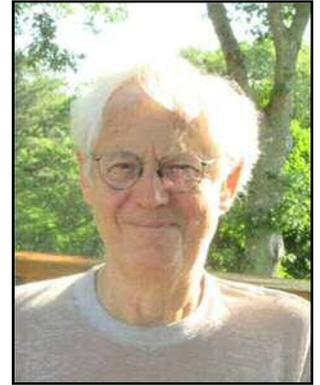


April 4 - Bryan Hamlin

“Darwin as a Person”



Hamlin commenced university in 1959—the centennial year of the publication of Charles Darwin’s *Origin of Species*. Aware of this, he studied early life forms, majoring in microbiology. What was Darwin like as a person? We will look at his family life, his friendships, his health struggles. What did he believe, and how does his scientific work stand the test of time? We will also look at Darwin’s links with the United States, including the Boston area.



Questions? Contact Pat Everett, pne@aol.com. All are welcome.

Ferry Beach Retreat

Save the Date: Friday to Monday, May 25-28

Registration in April



Save the dates! Mark your calendars now to join families, couples, and singles for this relaxed weekend on the beach with First Parish friends, old and new, at the UU Ferry Beach Camp and Conference Center in Saco, Maine, over Memorial Day weekend. Registration details will be in the April newsletter. Rooms and camping are both available onsite. To check out the campus, visit

<http://www.ferrybeach.org/>. For questions, contact Darien Smith at darien@smithquest.com.

First Tuesday Group

“From Bloom to Bouquet: the Art and Science of Flower Arrangement”

Tuesday, March 6, from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m., Parish Hall

Ellen Whitney, Faxon Green, and Jan Goddard-Taylor will present a talk, slide show, and live demonstrations on the art and science of flower arrangement. The demonstrations will be followed by small group discussions about the many roles flowers have in life’s memorable moments. Tips and tricks for home arrangements will help each participant prepare for spring. One lucky participant will go home with a fresh spring flower arrangement!

Please come if you are interested, whatever your age. For more information, contact Virginia Taylor, virginiarosstaylor@verizon.net or 978-263-9777.



Jewish Awareness Affinity Group

“The People of the Joke”

Friday, March 16, 7:00 p.m., Brooks Room

For thousands of years, the Jewish people have been persecuted, exiled, and almost annihilated countless times. Yet they have not only survived; they have thrived. This was due to their faith, a strong sense of culture, perseverance, and just plain tenacity. Now we explore another survival tactic—humor!



Come consider wordplay, irony, satire, and self-deprecation as a shield against anti-Semitic stereotypes. Bring your favorite Jewish jokes or just come to listen and laugh with this month's discussion leader Steph Chiha.

We'll share challah, wine, blessings, and conversation. All are welcome. For more information, contact Dana Snyder-Grant at dana.snydergrant@gmail.com or 978-760-1129.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee would like to know if you are interested in serving on the Standing Committee in the future! To read more, see page 14, [Can you serve?](#)

Passover Seder

Saturday, April 7, 5:00 p.m., Parish Hall

The Passover Seder is an ancient celebration of freedom. Rev. Amy Freedman, our Minister of Religious Education is leading our service. To read more about the [First Parish Seder](#), see page 4.



Communications at FP

To whom and by when do I send my submission?

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

What may I submit for publication in First Parish communications?

The MHN, *Sunday News*, and FP Announce are reserved for events at First Parish, events sponsored by First Parish, or something that falls under a staff member or First Parish Committee or Group. We hold to this policy, but if you feel your event deserves special consideration or are not sure whether your announcement falls under this guideline, please contact the appropriate staff member for clarification before you submit your message. If your submission does not fall within this guideline, the church office would be glad to print your write-up for the First Parish bulletin board. Please

Continued next page.

email or drop off a printable final form to the church office. We are glad to help as best we can.

Publicity Deadlines

Next April *Meeting House News* deadline: **March 13, 2018**

Next Publication Date: **March 22, 2018**



- **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.

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 Burns by Friday noon
 - b. **Sunday** insert – *Sunday News*; send to Sarah by Wednesday noon
 - c. **Monthly** newsletter – *Meeting House News (MHN)*; send to Wendy by the deadline noted in the first two pages of your last *MHN* or on the [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



Meeting House News (MHN)
Wendy Wolfberg, Editor
978-578-1077, cell
wolfberg@post.harvard.edu (email preferred)



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



Continued next page.

Meeting House Newsletter Deadlines

Issue	Deadline	Publication
Apr 2018	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
Oct	11-Sep-18	19-Sep-18
Nov	16-Oct-18	24-Oct-18
Dec	13-Nov-18	21-Nov-18
Jan 2019	11-Dec-18	19-Dec-18
Feb 2019	15-Jan-19	23-Jan-19

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

Questions?

Please contact the Editor, Wendy Wolfberg: 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; **Website:** 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.

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Year for Reflection and Visioning

Every 5 years! The Grand Finale!

- ✓ Listening Sessions? Done.
- ✓ Congregational Survey? Done!

All your thoughts and input come together March 9-10 at our All-Congregation Retreat! Don't forget to sign up!



The Standing Committee is planning an engaging, thoughtful, and stimulating program for everyone 13 years and older, where together we begin building the First Parish community we want for 2023. We'll provide child care and activities for younger children.

All-Congregation Retreat

1. Friday, March 9, 6:00 p.m.

Come share a potluck dinner and engage in community building activities, with the option to dance afterward, courtesy of the Immigration Justice Task Force.

2. Saturday, March 10, 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

- 8:30 a.m.—light breakfast.
- 9:00 a.m.—we'll unveil the results of our congregational survey.
- Parishioners Jim Sherblom and Jim Tull will lead an interactive workshop on compassionate communication, problem solving, and conflict resolution. [Jim Tull](#), provides training and process assistance in the areas of negotiation and dispute resolution as a partner with CMPartners. Rev. [Jim Sherblom](#), former CEO of TSI Corporation and venture capitalist, is an author and recently retired Senior Minister at First Parish in Brookline.
- We'll begin generating ideas around building stronger relationships and fully living our UU values within community.

Planning to Come? Don't forget to sign up!

Please [sign up](#) for the retreat at <https://tinyurl.com/y7wujo7x>.

PLEASE NOTE: Saturday's lunch will be a true [stone soup](#) community meal. Please bring something to contribute (i.e. onions, garlic, carrots, kale, turnip, cauliflower, squash, parsley, roast chicken, cooked sausage, canned beans, broth, pasta, etc.). Please have your contribution **cut up and ready to add**. We'll have a separate pot that will be gluten-free, nut-free, and vegan—so please label your contribution appropriately. We'll also serve salad and bread.

Questions?

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