



**First Parish
Unitarian Universalist
Of Medfield**
26 North Street, Medfield, MA
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www.firstparishmedfield.org



December Newsletter 2022

Ministerial Musings

Several years ago, when I was a student intern minister, I had a dream in which the President of the Unitarian Universalist Association asked me to preach at a Christmas Eve service that would be broadcast live on national television. She said it was up to me to introduce the Unitarian Universalist understanding of Christmas to the general public. In my dream, I remember thinking, "She asked little ol' me?? What an honor!"

Of course, I obsessed over what to say and finally decided to preach not a Christmas Eve sermon, but an Advent sermon on waiting, and, in my dream, an outline took shape. I would talk about the times when my wife was pregnant, and the patience that was needed as the embryo inside grew and matured. I would talk about the school that I used to teach at in Roxbury, where I watched my students grow and learn, becoming more self-sufficient and responsible. I would then expand this theme of waiting and talk about the way in

which something can start stirring within each of us and, that when the time is right, something new can be brought forth-- new life... new ideas... new insights... new hope.

In retrospect, it wouldn't have been a great sermon, especially if it was intended to introduce Unitarian Universalism to a national audience, but I do know that my dream was speaking to something stirring within me. Something was waiting to emerge, that could lead toward a whole new way of being.

For Christians, the four weeks preceding Christmas are a time of waiting with expectation for something to happen. They are filled with hope and yet there is also some uneasiness, even some doubt and fear, for at this point in the story, they don't know how it is going to end. They don't

know yet that a child is about to be born who will bring light and love to the world.

This is the way it can be with us in our individual lives as well when we experience a personal Advent, a time of waiting. We may sense that something is about to happen, something momentous, something essential for our being. But it may feel risky. We may be filled with fear and have trouble trusting that all will be OK.

Is there something stirring inside you? Something that will open up new possibilities? That's essential for your well-being? That will bring forth new life?

Many blessings,
Dave

Religious Exploration

Jennifer Goodman, DRE



Hello everyone,

As of this writing we are looking forward to our intergenerational Thanksgiving Service, "Friendsgiving," on November 20, as well as our intergenerational Solstice Service on December 18. The children will have a big part in representing aspects of those holidays and sharing their energy with everyone.

Meanwhile, we'll be planning the events and having seasonally-focused and theme-based discussions and activities. All children 1st grade and up are welcome; please fill out the registration form before dropping them off. We are also looking for middle school and high school volunteers to help. Thank you!

Upcoming Services

December 4

Dappled with Shadow

Rev. Dave Egan

As we enter the season when the days grow shorter and the nights longer, we will explore what it means to have more darkness in our world than light. Is the coming darkness something to be fearful of, or might it be something to embrace? As T.S. Eliot's writes, "in our rhythm of earthly life we tire of light. We are glad when the day ends...."

December 11

Good King Wenceslas

Rev. Dave Egan

"Good King Wenceslas" is a Christmas carol that tells a story of a Bohemian king who goes on a journey, braving harsh winter weather, to give alms to a poor peasant on the Feast of Stephen. The legend is based on the life of the historical Saint Wenceslaus I, Duke of Bohemia (907–935), who gave alms generously to widows, orphans, and those in prison. Who was this man and what might he have to teach us today?

December 18

Solstice Service

FPUU Children

This intergenerational worship service will be created and led by the children from our Religious Exploration program. The service will feature stories and music that relate to Solstice, the shortest day of the year.

December 24

Christmas Eve Service

Rev. Dave Egan

A traditional celebration of the season, our intergenerational Christmas Eve service will feature lots of holiday stories, the lighting of candles, and traditional Christmas carols. This service will begin at 5:30 PM. To keep everyone safe and healthy during this indoor service, masks will be required.

December 25

Christmas Day - No worship service

Notes from the Church Office:



Please remember the following deadlines:

Church Newsletter: Third Sunday of the month.

Order of Service: Wednesdays by 5:00 pm.

Church Office Hours: Mondays & Thursdays from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Email: admin@firstparishmedfield.org

Sandra Andreassi-Administrator

From the Executive Board

Executive Board Discusses Financial Health of First Parish at Special Meeting

The First Parish Executive Board held a special meeting to discuss the long-term financial health of FPUU on Monday, November 7. Board members, plus five members from the larger congregation, first reviewed the budget as approved at the June Annual meeting. As projected at that time, First Parish is on pace to run a deficit of about \$11,000. Unlike many years in the past when income from various sources managed to close the gap, doing so this year is unlikely. If the projected trend is accurate, monies will have to be taken from free cash and cash reserves to cover the deficit at the end of the fiscal year in June 2023. While assets are sufficient to do so this year and for a few more years going forward, continuing in this way is not fiscally responsible and would threaten the long-term survival of First Parish.

Discussion then turned to ways to restore FPUU to financial health. It quickly became apparent that

smaller scaled efforts (chocolate auction, Medfield Day, yard sales) while enjoyable, cannot provide a sufficient fiscal foundation. Other options were brought forward. These include the pursuit of grants both locally and nationally, and ways in which the campus of First Parish might be used to generate income in ways consistent with our values. Particular attention was given to the creation of affordable housing.

As it contemplates next steps, the board intends to give a full report and description of possible plans at next June's annual meeting. Several attendees have committed themselves to take the lead in developing these plans. In this way, the meeting provided a valuable beginning for what is likely to be multiyear effort. Please contact Bill Wians, board chair, with any questions or to become involved in this important work.

First Parish Semi-Annual Meeting, December 18, 2022



The First Parish Semi-Annual meeting will take place on Sunday, December 18, 2022 at 11:30 AM in the sanctuary and on Zoom (at the Sunday service link). The meeting will include a report on the general state of the church by the Board Chair, the Minister's report, a financial update from the Treasurer, and any other business put forward by those present. A quorum of 25 percent of membership is required to vote on any motions. Please plan to attend.

Veterans Day Vigil Photos





The Medfield Holiday Stroll is this **Friday Dec 2nd** from 4-9pm, and the Baxter Park tree lighting ceremony is 6:30-7:30ish. (See 'Bellforge.org' for stroll map and event details)

FPUU PLANS:

The Membership Outreach Committee has planned First Parish's participation in the stroll with the following outdoor activities, similar to last year:

- holiday movies outdoors
- kids ornament/craft table
- write and mail postcards to santa table

Martha, Jess, and Kirsten would be grateful if people could commit to helping for an hour between 3:30 and 9 pm. Contact Kirsten D'Abate, 617-780-0261 (or Jess or Martha).

The Medfield Garden Club Holiday Greens Sale

The First Parish UU of Medfield



**Saturday, December 3rd
10 a.m. until noon**

Christmas wreaths, swags, kissing balls, basket arrangements, centerpieces, cemetery memorials, and the Garden Club's well-known miniature boxwood trees will all be available for sale. This is the Club's primary fundraiser and the proceeds support the Club's efforts to beautify the town, including the 19 roadside gardens.



Come early for the best selection!

Notes from the Music Director

Hello, friends! The FPUU Choir, the Kornets and myself are some of the musicians performing at the 8th annual Lowell Mason Holiday Concert. I hope you can join us for this wonderful annual event!

Eva

The Annual Lowell Mason House Holiday Concert marks its 8th year with performances beginning at 7 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 3 at St. Edward's Church at 133 Spring St. in Medfield.

Performers of all ages will share the gift of music with the community in the spirit of the holidays.

Helping to carry out the "Celebrating Community Voices" theme of this year's event will be Libby Allison, long-time Medfield resident, professor of music education at Berklee College of Music, and an award-winning educator. In 2019, Allison received the Berklee Distinguished Faculty Award.

A new addition to this year's holiday music program is a volunteer choir directed by Jonathan Gray performing the "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's Messiah.

Other featured performers include:

- Concert pianist David McGrory
- Medfield High School Chamber Strings and Jazz Combo
- First Parish Unitarian Universalist Choir
- Becca and John Kornet
- Eva Kendrick
- Trills 'n Chills a cappella group
- Montrose School Treblemakers a cappella group
- Ian Kasarjian, St. Edwards music director
- Eric Bouwman-Wozencraft, Church of the Advent music director
- MEMO "Joy to the World" outstanding performers

Tickets for the Lowell Mason House Holiday Concert are available online via LowellMasonHouse.net <<http://lowellmasonhouse.net/>> and at the concert door. Beginning Nov. 17, tickets will also be on sale at The Center on Icehouse Road.

Adult tickets are \$20 each; senior citizen and student tickets are \$15 each. Families purchasing multiple tickets have the option of paying a flat price of \$50 if tickets are purchased together.

Known as the Father of Music Education in America's schools, Lowell Mason was born in Medfield in 1792. In addition to Mason's role in music education, he was also a composer who wrote a number of well-known songs, including the holiday classic, "Joy to the World."

The house where Mason was born and lived was saved from demolition and moved to its current Green Street location adjacent to Hinkley Pond in 2011. Each year, proceeds from the annual holiday concert bring the Lowell Mason House renovation and construction efforts closer to completion for the ultimate benefit of music educators, students and the community at large.



Blood Drive Huge Success!

Hi Sara,

Congratulations on a great, successful blood drive! Thank you for all you did to organize, promote and recruit!

We had 40 registered donors, 8 deferrals, collecting 33 units of lifesaving blood. These will help to save up to 99 lives. We also had 10 first time donors, which is fantastic! We are always looking to expand our donor base.

I can't thank you enough for all of your help- your enthusiasm and dedication to our lifesaving mission.

Hoping we can make this an annual drive in the fall.

Please let me know about adding another drive in the spring, perhaps early May.

Have a great Thanksgiving!

Best,

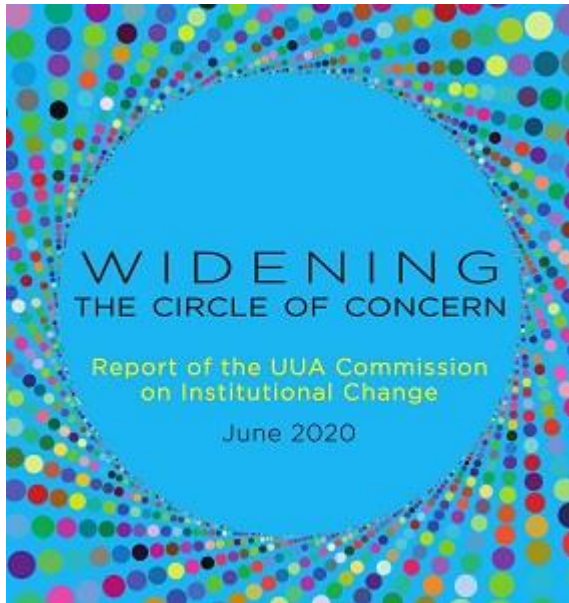
Janice Kafka
Senior Account Manager

American Red Cross



Anti-racism Team News

First Parish's Anti-racism Team (ART) will be reading the UUA's *Widening the Circle of Concern* over the next year. We have selected Session 5, *Living Our Values in the World*, for review at our December 4 meeting at 7 pm on Zoom. Please join us!



In 2017, the Board of Trustees of the UUA appointed the Commission on Institutional Change to analyze systemic racism and multicultural oppression within UUism. *Widening the Circle of Concern: Report of the UUA Commission on Institutional Change* (published in 2020) represents the culmination of the Commission's work and makes recommendations to advance long-term cultural and institutional change. The report is accompanied by a study/action guide for thinking about one's own congregation. Many local UU churches are studying this report after passage of the 8th Principle.

You can access the entire report at this link:

<https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/cic/widening>

Here is the link for the study/action guide:

https://www.uua.org/files/2020-10/widening_study_action.pdf

Contact any ART member for the meeting Zoom link or with questions.

Thank you!

ART members: Kay Bennett (kay8941@gmail.com), Thea Iberall (theaiberall@yahoo.com), Becca Kornet (becca_kornet@yahoo.com), Margaret Rolph (margaretrolph@gmail.com), Jeanette Ruyle (jruyle23@verizon.net)

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To order on Amazon, please use this link:

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/redirect-home/firstparisuuch01> First Parish will receive about 5% of what you order and will not cost you anything!!!

(One important note - if you had items in your Amazon 'shopping basket' before using this link, First Parish won't get the benefit of your shopping. Only items placed in the shopping basket AFTER clicking the above link help)



Please join us for the First Parish Annual Christmas Eve Candlelight Service



Saturday, December 24th at 5:30 pm

Bring your family and friends to join in the magic. We will have special music, including our Choir. We will have stories traditional and modern from our young adults. We will have singing from all and bright candles of joy and celebration and hope renewing itself.

To keep everyone safe and healthy during this indoor service, masks will be required.





Green Sanctuary Committee

Our next meeting is tentatively Jan. 6, 2023 at 7pm via Zoom. All are welcome! Email [Jeanette Ruyle](mailto:JeanetteRuyle@gmail.com) for link and more info.



Our church window saga continues

You might recall that the GSC constructed homemade DIY removeable interior insulating window inserts for the drafty vestry windows in 2019. We measured and cut, as best we could, wood strapping for the frames and then applied thin clear plastic film from window insulating kits available at hardware stores.



These inserts are meant to be reusable, and they have been to a certain extent. But now, three years later, the gaps around the edges are ever more evident and need plugging up (see photo). It is rare that the thin plastic film and two-sided tape with which to attach the film stay intact from year to year. This means purchasing new kits and using more plastic, *and*, it is not exactly quick easy work. Margaret, Fritz, and Jeanette recently experienced this firsthand, with [Murphy's law](#) in full play.

In our opinion, a much better, more effective, and lasting alternative would be to purchase commercially made insulating interior window inserts. The Dwight Derby House across the pond from FPUU has been using them for a number of years. We are impressed with one company, [Indow Windows](#); check it out. We even have an estimate from them. Curious for more information? As stated in last month's newsletter piece, there are several factors involved when it comes to decisions about windows. The GSC is working closely with the Exec Board on all this. Let us know if you want to hear the whole story.

In the meantime, we hope you stay warm inside whatever building you are in while using the most climate-friendly heating fuel possible along with having as tight an "envelope" as possible!



A Message from the Social Justice Incubator



hope is found in hearts connected

Most Needed Items Request

The following items would be gratefully received by the unhoused community of Waltham:



- \$5.00 Dunkin Donuts Gift Certificates
- Cans of caffeinated coffee for the winter breakfast program
- Men's sweatpants & hooded sweatshirts, sizes large & extra large
- Winter hats & gloves, sizes medium – extra large
- Warm socks
- Long underwear, sizes large & extra large
- Warm blankets
- Sleeping bags
- Masks

If you would like to donate items, they can be placed in the donation box in the Vestry.

Your generous, ongoing support for Chaplains on the Way is greatly appreciated.

Feel free to contact Louise Rachin at 617-429-7319 or lrachin@comcast.net with any questions.



Monthly Mediation & Reflection

Shirley Riga, Spiritual Director & Member of the Pastoral Care Committee

Rolling Rocks



I used to be a grudge holder. If someone hurt me, I would forever remember who they were and what they did. The hurt would be filed away in my inner memory vowing never to visit with again. We were done.

What I didn't realize while holding these grudges was that I carried the pain I felt around with me. Like a rock wrapped in paper that held the words of my pain, the story was gripped in my hand and carried everywhere. The story defined me, my story of pain. The story shaped my core beliefs. I collected many stories of pain.

After my daughter was born so sick, after my divorce happened, after I came to terms with the toxic dysfunction of my family, on reflection, I felt like I finally understood why I think the way I think and act the way I do. I felt validated by these stories that gave me license to accept my dysfunction because I have been through a lot and that's why I am who I am. Of course.

As time went on, awareness grew, I realized I was still gripping onto the rocks wrapped tightly with my sad painful stories. I was holding them with all my might just to prove to myself and others how strong I am, how worthy I am to have survived. I couldn't feel the cramped fingers grasping any more. I couldn't feel my whole body wrapped in the identity of these stories, these painful stories of my life. I couldn't see who I was anymore because I was the stories.

It was suggested to me in therapy to define who I am beyond my stories. I thought this idea was ridiculous because I am defined by my experiences, aren't I? My strength lies in my struggle, doesn't it? My kindness resulted from years of feeling worthless, doesn't it? My relentless fight against my daughter's illness proves how much I loved her and how good a mother I was, doesn't it?

I'm remembering the first time I found me before I became defined by my stories. I had a vivid imagination which brought me on adventurous travels on river

houseboats. I galloped through mazes on a unicorn discovering new lands. I made dear friends with trees and animals and visited them often. I interacted with the world in an imaginary safe place. I was curious. I was excited and welcoming to new adventures.

Like Sisyphus and the rock, all my tales of pain wrapped in rocks became my focus. The rock became bigger than me, always present and stronger than me. My helpless, hopeless innocence became so laden with real stories of pain and loss, all I saw was the rock.

I was unhappy and wanted more. That's what forced me to use my awareness and find the ways and means to change. I learned to step aside the path of my resistance, holding all my stories in place, and let the rock roll down the hill.

Fighting, resistance, standing up against the wrongs are all words that kept me in the game and the fight. I changed the habitual dynamic of fighting into acceptance. I stepped away and sifted through the painful stories and pulled out the glimmering lessons I learned. Every story became a teacher in my life. Every painful memory held wisdom that strengthened me. The characters, the wrongs that couldn't be righted, the things that weren't fair, I let roll down the hill.

It's a simple exercise that represents a metaphor of letting go. When I feel resistant, anger about what's not happening, clearly seeing the right of a situation, the story becomes real. I hold it in my hand gripping the rock like there's no tomorrow and then I let it go. I drop the rock and feel the relief as I let go. Relaxation flows in with renewed blood flow. I see the story rolling down the hill. The gifts in the story rise up like birds taking flight as the rock rolls down out of sight.

I breathe, imagine a struggle, grip my hand around the struggle, breathe and release, let go. Repeating is welcomed.

I grab the gift, the insight, the silver lining, the aha moment and give gratitude thankful for my willingness to learn and grow through the stories of my life.

FPUU Calendar of Events

Thursday, December 1	Pastoral Care Committee Meeting/7:00 pm/Zoom
Friday, December 2	Medfield Holiday Stroll/4:00 pm/Grounds
Saturday, December 3	Medfield Garden Club Greens Sale/10-12 am/Vestry
Sunday, December 4	Choir Practice/9:00 am/Sanctuary UU Bible Study/11:30 am/U-House Anti-Racism Team/7:00 pm/Zoom
Thursday, December 8	Worship & Music Committee Meeting/7:00 pm/Zoom
Sunday, December 11	Choir Practice/9:00 am/Sanctuary Men's Group/11:30 am/U-House
Tuesday, December 13	RE Committee Meeting/7:30 pm/Zpp,
Wednesday, December 14	Committee on Ministry Meeting/7:00 pm/Zoom
Thursday, December 15	Executive Board Meeting/7:30 pm/Zoom
Sunday, December 18	Hanukkah Begins Choir Practice/9:00 am/Sanctuary RE Solstice Service Semi-Annual Meeting/11:30 am/Sanctuary & Zoom
Wednesday, December 21	Membership Outreach Committee/7:00 pm/Zoom
Thursday, December 22	Building & Grounds Committee/7:00 pm/Zoom
Saturday, December 24	Christmas Eve Service/7:00 pm/Sanctuary
Sunday, December 25	Christmas Day/No service today
Monday, December 26	Hanukkah Ends

