

# *First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Medfield*

**26 North Street,  
Medfield, MA  
(508) 359-4594**

[www.firstparishmedfield.org](http://www.firstparishmedfield.org)



## **February Newsletter 2024**

### **Ministerial Musings**

Some of you may know that I came down with a nasty bout of Covid after Christmas. Nothing dangerous, but it was an unpleasant week filled with coughing, congestion, fever, and body aches. Though the worst part wasn't the symptoms, but the loneliness that came from my quarantine.

Two days before I tested positive, we had flown to Minnesota to spend the week with Karina's parents, aunts, uncles, cousins in the Minneapolis area, and also my cousins in Northern Minnesota; you know, the part of Minnesota where each meal comes with creamed corn, jello salad, and if you are lucky, a freshly caught walleye. But once I tested positive, I was stuck in my in-law's basement, while everyone else gathered with dozens of family members and had a grand old time. At least I had my laptop and old Curb Your Enthusiasm reruns to keep me occupied.

But after two days of this, of traversing from the bed to the bathroom and back again, occasionally interspersed by a meal being brought down into my dark lair, I started to feel really lonely. Then my loneliness turned into depression. I wanted to be hanging out with my cousin Dwight, hearing about the fish he caught

that morning in his icehouse on the frozen lake. I wanted to share a beer with my Uncle Rick and debate his conservative Christian theology and why he should finally accept the good news of Unitarian Universalism. I wanted to play Operation with my little cousins and laugh when we can't remove the tricky Adam's apple, and the nose buzzer goes off. But instead, all I had was my screen and the obnoxious antics of Larry David.

Laying in that bed day in and day out brought back all of the horrible memories of the Covid lockdown of a few years ago. The loneliness, the yearning to hug one another, the grief of missing another family gathering. You all remember. It was a painful few years we all lived through. I think my bout of Covid brought back my unprocessed trauma from that time, an emotional, physical, and spiritual nightmare.

That is why I was so overjoyed spending the weekend with you all over the past few days for our Stewardship For Us weekend. We shared meals together, we reflected on what it is about First Parish that means so much to us, we shared fond memories of times long ago, we played board games, we laughed... oh did we laugh! These are the moments that make me come alive and feel connected to community, something I desperately missed during the Covid lockdown and my personal lockdown from a month ago. This past weekend I was reminded just how fortunate we are to have one another. To have a group of people who are there for us, who support us, who love us even when we are at our most unlovable.

For all of this and more, I am eternally grateful to be serving this wonderful congregation. I hope you too appreciate just how lucky we all are. For the world can be quite difficult sometimes, but it is so much easier when we are in community with such caring people.

See you Sunday,  
Dave

## Stewardship for Us Weekend Yields Recommendations for the Future



The just-concluded consultation visit with Stewardship for Us was an exciting if exhausting weekend. Beginning on Friday evening and concluding at 2pm on Sunday, Consultant Barry Finkelstein met with nearly half of First Parish's membership. Finkelstein listened to many hopes and concerns, and provided a verbal summary of recommendations and challenges, including some items that can be addressed right away.

Membership, financial planning, and growth were discussed in detail. A written report will follow. The Executive Board thanks everyone for their participation in this important endeavor.

## Upcoming Worship Services

**February 4**

**What's Really Real?**

**Rev. Dave Egan**

Some of us are natural born skeptics, firmly entrenched in the rational, in the material world. But what if there really is a lot more to life? Come this Sunday with an open heart to the unseen possibilities to the universe.

**February 11**

**Broken your Vows a Thousand Times...**

**Rev. Dave Egan**

As Valentine's Day draws near, we talk about love and the relationships. But what happens when we fall short and break our vows to one another? How do we come back into right relationship after harm has been done? As the Sufi poet Rumi reminds us, "Wanderer, worshiper, lover of leaving, come. Ours is not a caravan of despair. It doesn't matter if you've broken your vows a thousand times, still, come, and yet again, come!"

**February 18**

**Music Sunday**

**Worship & Music Committee**

On this Sunday, our fabulous Music Director Eva Kendrick and our Worship and Music Committee will offer an intergenerational worship service filled with the power of song. During this Music Sunday, we will hear from our First Parish Choir, and other singers and musicians as well. We hope you will join us as we share the gift of music together.

**February 25**

**When Bad Things Happen**

**Rev. Dave Egan**

Some of us, living a life of privilege in a country where the opportunities for success & fulfillment abound, seem oblivious to how precarious & arbitrary life can be and are surprised when things don't work out like we'd planned. The reality is that few of us will get through life unscathed, so how are we to respond to this reality?

## Notes from the Church Office

Please remember the following deadlines:

Church Newsletter: Third Sunday of the month. This month it's on February 18th.

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](mailto:admin@firstparishmedfield.org) Sandra Andreassi-Administrator



## Religious Exploration



A big thank you to Sarah Zitoli, Eva Conley Kendrick, and the kids of FPUU for their fantastic job in the Winter Solstice Service! It was a wonderful production, and we all thank the congregation for their enthusiastic support of our children and their performance.

RE class is underway with our short videos and activities from the 'CartUUns' and 'Bluey' curricula, as well as other fun lessons designed by Sarah Zitoli. We would love to have volunteers to fill our RE and Little Lights Guide openings – we are looking for volunteers for both roles for February, March and April. Below are the links to the signups. If there are any questions, please contact Tiane and Kirsten at [cre@firstparishmedfield.org](mailto:cre@firstparishmedfield.org).

### RE Guide:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C094AA5AD2DAAF9C07-44321120-reguide#/>

### Little Lights Guide:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C094AA5AD2DAAF9C07-44321536-little#/>

Your service has played a pivotal role during this year of transition in Religious Exploration – thank you for your continued willingness to volunteer, it makes a huge difference!

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## Our Whole Lives (OWL)



**Our Whole Lives**

A requirement to participate in Our Whole Lives (OWL) is the parent orientation. Cissy and John facilitated a mock OWL session for the participants'

parents at the beginning of January. Three of our four families are new to the program and learned about developing our covenant, the program outline, our OWL Bill of Rights and our program values. We viewed the visuals the young people would be seeing throughout the program, and we discussed the Circles of Sexuality (more on that next month!).

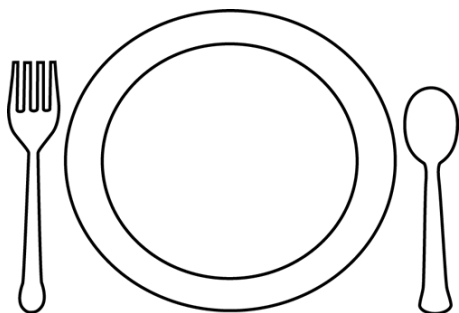
One of the parent activities is reflecting on the

sexuality education you might have received at home - or might not have. What messages did you get about:

- \* your own body?
- \* touch, and the need for affection?
- \* gender roles?
- \* sexual pleasure?
- \* sexual responsibility?

Our Whole Lives is a comprehensive sexuality education that is as relevant in our community as it was 20 years ago when First Parish began offering it. Usually our young people receive dependable information at home but then receive misinformation from peers and the media. OWL facilitators provide a safe space to ask questions and reinforce the values learned at home.

## Small Suppers February 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>



Join us for a special invitation to Small Suppers 2024! Experience the warmth of an intimate gathering, where groups of 6-10 will come together for potluck dinner parties hosted by our fellow First Parish members. Mark your calendars for Saturday, February 3 or Saturday, February 10, to enjoy engaging conversation, embrace the winter spirit, and build community! What's new this year? We're encouraging you to extend the invitation to someone outside the church, giving them the opportunity to meet parishioners and discover more about First Parish!

To reserve your spot, simply RSVP via email to George Lester at [george@lesteronline.net](mailto:george@lesteronline.net). Let George know the number of attendees and your preferred Saturday. As the dates approach, we'll facilitate group coordination by connecting you via email with your host to plan logistics and discuss what each attendee can bring. Feel free to reach out to George for any inquiries.

## Building & Grounds Workday - Sunday, Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> at 11:30am



Come join us after coffee hour for a pizza lunch followed by cleaning up, repairing and beautifying our campus. There will be big and small jobs both indoors and outside.

If you can stay for an hour or three, we welcome any and all help! All ages are welcome. If you are interested, please contact our B&G Chair Nate Razza at: [nrazza@gmail.com](mailto:nrazza@gmail.com).

## Collection for Chaplains on the Way



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](mailto:lrachin@comcast.net) with any questions.

## From the Annual Fund Drive Committee

### Annual Fund Drive Kickoff Dinner Saturday March 16 6:30 PM - ?



#### First Parish vestry

Come join us for an evening dinner, socialization and kick off of the annual fund drive campaign.

Our theme this year is:

"The Healing Power of a Generous Community"

We look forward to you joining us!

Please  
RSVP to: [don.rolph@gmail.com](mailto:don.rolph@gmail.com)

## Medfield Food Cupboard

Please place non-perishables in the container in the narthex. Most needed items:



- Boost/Ensure (chocolate or vanilla)
- Tuna (solid white, in water)
- Creamy peanut butter
- Jelly/jam (12 or 18 oz)
- Individually portioned snacks

Any questions, email [becca\\_kornet@yahoo.com](mailto:becca_kornet@yahoo.com)



## Green Sanctuary Committee



Our next meeting is Feb. 27, 2024 at 7pm via Zoom. All are welcome! Email [Jeanette Ruyle](#) for link and more info.



**ACTUARY GREGATION** *Our mission is to raise consciousness about the environment, motivate for individual and systemic change, generate commitment to community action, and promote environmental justice, recognizing that all injustices are connected.*

1. Contract with Painters Pride is signed! Outside repair and painting of the sanctuary windows and frames will happen sometime this spring. This is just the second step in getting our church building “envelope” tightened and more energy efficient (the first step was the installation of interior window inserts in the vestry windows in 2023). Further steps include installing an additional window layer on all sanctuary windows, and attending to various smaller air leaks around the building.



Beyond tightening the envelope to reduce greenhouse gases *and save money*, future steps include electrifying our ancient gas heating system, and the hot water heater when it needs to be replaced, and then looking into roof solar panels.

- 2.** If you missed the webinar on Jan. 20 “Environmental Justice: Where should it all go? Building our new electric grid,” here is the [recording](#) and here are [slides](#). **You are encouraged to take climate environmental action by signing [this petition](#) for Environmental Justice Siting Improvement in MA. Also access through this QR code.** >>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>

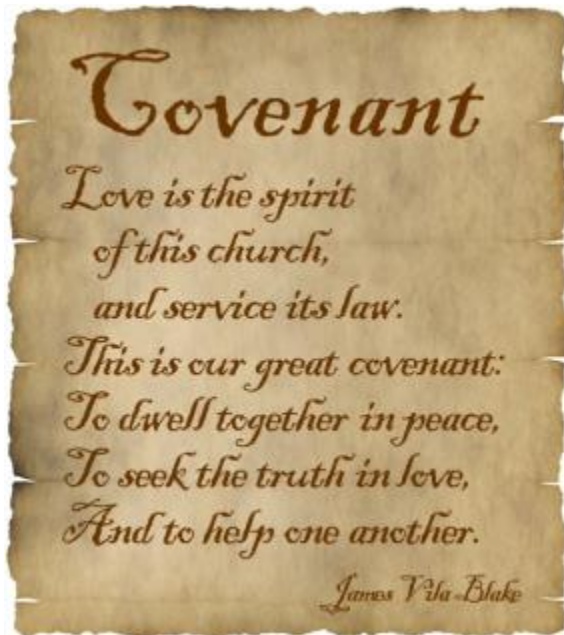


The MA state bill associated with this petition is [S.2113/H.3187](#), aimed at expediting the development of clean energy while protecting environmental justice communities. It would introduce significant reforms to the state's Energy Facilities Siting Board. The bill is a top priority of the [Mass Power Forward](#) coalition, a coalition of many of the state's most influential climate and environmental organizations.

**"It's important to do this [end fossil fuels] transition quickly, but we want to make sure it's done equitably."** Claire-Karl Müller, coordinator of Mass Power Forward and leader of UU Mass Action's Environmental Justice Group



# Creating a Congregational Covenant



As you may be aware, this year we have formed a Right Relation Team (RRT). This group is tasked with working to create a congregational covenant and to help mediate any conflict that may arise in the congregation.

To help us draft a covenant, we will be reaching out to the congregation in the coming weeks with a few survey questions about what types of things we may want to have in our congregational covenant. To crystallize our ideas further, we will hold two brainstorming sessions, one in-person, one on Zoom. Then the RRT will take these ideas and draft a congregational covenant that will be formally voted on at our annual meeting in June.

To give you an idea by what is meant by a congregational covenant, this description is taken from the UUA's website:

"Covenant is the silk that joins Unitarian Universalist (UU) congregations, communities, and individuals together in a web of interconnection. The practice of promising to walk together is the precious core of our creedless faith.

"Covenant" is both a noun and a verb. It can be a written agreement among individual community members promising to behave in certain ways, and it can mean to engage in mutual promises with Spirit, with other people and communities.

Congregational Covenants can take many forms and reflect the needs and best wishes of a variety of groups—from church committee members to staff groups to how members of an entire congregation agree to be in right relationship with one another.

Creating and agreeing to a covenant can be an extremely effective tool for building a foundation of trust. By creating shared expectations around the behaviors we want to cultivate, we come closer to creating the beloved community. A covenant is also the positive expression of healthy behavior, so that leaders have more clarity in identifying and responding to disruptive behavior." More info can be found at: <https://www.uua.org/leaderlab/congregational-covenants>

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach to any of us on the Right Relations Team.

In faith and service,

Right Relations Team: Rev. Dave Egan, chair, Darline Lewis, Wes Sutton, and Rebecca Stevenson.



# Monthly Mediation & Reflection

Shirley Riga, Spiritual Director

Member of the Pastoral Care Committee

## FINDING HOPE IN 2024

Today I am choosing to write about hope. It is the very essence of one foot in front of the other. As I heal from a broken leg after a terrible fall resulting in surgery and recovery, I find myself at wit's end. When I fell, my life halted and I am still picking up the pieces and mending them together much like the Japanese art of [Kintsugi](#). Kintsugi is making beautiful what was broken by mending the pieces together and recreating a more beautiful piece. Some pieces of my life I am discarding, realizing I do not need to hang on anymore.

I spent a recent Saturday at the Dedham Public library where I witnessed my friend, [Deana Tavares](#), launch her new poetry book, [Bleeding Heart Sunrise](#). Deana has faced and continues to face health challenges, as well as many other challenges and finds inspiration and hope through art, people, words and music. She is an inspiration. I share her poem below on hope:

### Finding Hope

Please don't hope less Help US Hope more Idealistic Altruistic I've been called worse things before	Though there are hope filled hacks And hopeful tricks There are many cancers That hope has kicked	Wake up Shake off the dust Break down those walls
The very word hopeful Can inspire Motivate Open doors Hopeless is final The elevator doesn't go any lower We've reached the bottom floor	Hopeless Never won awards Never saw what was behind Unopened doors	Preconceived notions Stereotypes Assumptions Will only divide Put it all out there Then nothing can hide
Hope Is eagerly waiting With bated breath That the answers and solutions Will soon arise The lack of hope will not Let anything living Thrive Better yet Survive	But hope Hope Will tread A different route Find the light Not block it out	Or break Or crack The earth around US Rumble and shake Everything that grounds us Creating a fissure A rift A crevasse For without hope We are all lost
Lungs and hearts Are crushed By hopeless bricks	Even under layers of wood And dust Slabs of concrete Stand up and walk Upon broken feet	A hopeless world Will swallow us whole Flush all of our dreams Right down the bowl
	This hope It lives Inside us all	Please don't hope less Help each other Hope more

# General Assembly 2024

Early Bird Registration Available through February 29



UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
VIRTUAL GA • JUNE 20 - 23, 2024

In a world that is filled with division and challenges, the theme for this year's [General Assembly](#) is a reminder of the principles that unite all of us as UUs. "Love Unites, Stories Ignite" celebrates the impact of love as a binding force that transcends boundaries and fosters connections within our faith community and beyond.

Our faith is rooted in storytelling, and this year we'll explore how our stories ignite change, inspire compassion, and help us build a more just and equitable world. It is through stories that we can find common ground, deepening our understanding of one another and of the world around us.

The 63rd General Assembly will take place virtually **Thursday, June 20 through Sunday, June 23, 2024**. Adult registration is \$280, and includes access to General Assembly 2024 in the Whova event app, as well as on-demand programming, featured speakers, and major worships. Register through February 29 with a down payment of \$50 by selecting the Early Bird Payment Plan at checkout. Voting delegates who wish to participate only in General Sessions may also register with the business-only option; this option is no-cost, but a donation is suggested. Registration rates increase March 1, 2024.

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## Dignity Matters



FPUU supports Dignity Matters, a local non-profit that provides menstrual supplies and undergarments to 15,000 women and girls in Massachusetts living in poverty and/or experiencing homelessness.



They are having a fall drive and are collecting donations of tampons, pads (including Depends type pads/underwear), new underwear, and new/gently used bras. Donations can be left in the bin located on the porch of the U House.

If you prefer, shop their [Amazon Wish List](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2AoBMFSCKYN4W/refnav_wishlist_lists_1?pf_rd_p=5a6d3000-4000-4000-4000-4000) for shipment directly to the Dignity Matters warehouse. [https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2AoBMFSCKYN4W/refnav\\_wishlist\\_lists\\_1?](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2AoBMFSCKYN4W/refnav_wishlist_lists_1?pf_rd_p=5a6d3000-4000-4000-4000-4000)

If you have any questions, email [becca\\_kornet@yahoo.com](mailto:becca_kornet@yahoo.com). Thank you!



# FERRY BEACH RETREAT

## MAY 17-19



Join us in Saco Maine for a fun, restorative, all-ages retreat at Ferry Beach!  
 Relax while collecting shells along the beautiful, seven-mile-long, sandy beach,  
 play on the playgrounds, sing by the campfire in the wooded grove, or read a good book on the porch.  
 We will hold our Sunday worship service in the outdoor chapel among the tall pines.  
 Like last year, this will be a shared retreat with the First Universalist Society of Franklin.

There are a variety of types of lodging to choose from: dorms, cottages, cabins, or campsites.  
 We will arrive Friday afternoon or evening (no dinner served Friday night).  
 Our Ferry Beach Retreat includes breakfast, lunch, dinner on Saturday, and breakfast on Sunday.  
 Ferry Beach Retreat & Conference Center will follow current Maine COVID guidelines.

Registration begins on Monday, March 4th, on a first come first serve basis.



# POETRY CORNER

by Thea Iberall

What a great Poetry Sunday we had on January 21. People have been asking about the poems and even about learning more about poetry appreciation. So, here's one of the poems that was shared. It's by David McCord. Learn more about him at <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/david-mccord>

**Joe** By David McCord

We feed the birds in winter,

And outside in the snow

We have a tray of many seeds

For many birds of many breeds

And one gray squirrel named Joe.

But Joe comes early,

Joe comes late,

And all the birds

Must stand and wait.

And waiting there for Joe to go

Is pretty cold work in the snow.

Other poems that were shared include:

[On the Liquidation of the Mustang Ranch by the Internal Revenue Service. By X.J.Kennedy](#)

[Yahweh to Urset — Navarre S. Momaday](#)

[Lullaby by W.H. Auden](#)

Poets have a choice in the words and themes and language they use. In studying poetry over the years, I have developed a chart of about 50 dimensions of poetry, related to language, look, sound, and format. It's fascinating, and knowing even just a little about the choices poets make can go a long way towards appreciating it more. I'd like to share some of these concepts with you. I am willing to teach a Poetry Appreciation Workshop as a webinar or a series of webinars. How about during National Poetry Month?

## FPUU Calendar of Events

Thursday, February 1	Pastoral Care Committee Meeting/7:00 pm/Zoom The Larger Circle Band Practice/7:00 pm/Vestry
Saturday, February 3	Small Suppers/Offsite
Sunday, February 4	OWL/7:00 pm/Vestry
Monday, February 5	Staff Meeting/10:30 am/Zoom Medfield Historical Society Meeting/7:00 pm/Vestry
Thursday, February 8	Worship & Music Committee Meeting/7:00 pm/Zoom The Larger Circle Band Practice/7:00 pm/Vestry
Saturday, February 10	Small Suppers/Offsite
Sunday, February 11	Men's Group Lunch/11:30 am/U-House OWL/7:00 pm/Vestry
Wednesday, February 14	Membership Outreach Committee Meeting/7:00 pm/Zoom
Thursday, February 15	Executive Board Meeting/7:00 pm/Zoom The Larger Circle Band Practice/7:00 pm/Vestry
Sunday, February 18	Newsletter Deadline OWL/7:00 pm/Vestry
Wednesday, February 21	Right Relations Team Meeting/7:00 pm/Zoom Annual Fund Drive Committee Meeting/7:15 pm/Zoom
Thursday, February 22	Larger Circle Band Practice/7:00 pm/Vestry RE Committee Meeting/7:30 pm/Zoom
Sunday, February 25	Men's Group Lunch/U-House/11:30 am OWL/7:00 pm/Vestry
Tuesday, February 27	Green Sanctuary Committee Meeting/7:00 pm/Zoom

