

*First Parish Unitarian
Universalist of
Medfield*

26 North Street, Medfield,
MA

(508) 359-4594

www.firstparishmedfield.org

Happy New Year!

*Character is the ability to carry out a good resolution
long after the excitement of the moment has passed.*

Cavett Robert



January Newsletter 2016

From the Minister

Happy 2016!

"Now is the moment of magic," Victoria Safford wrote. It is the new year, after all. And maybe you are like me. At the new year, I want to look around for what's beautiful and positive on the horizon, but things in the world that pose a challenge or a threat jump out instead. We're animals, I guess, and our survival instincts really go to work as we scan what's in our field of view, don't they?

And threats are out there to be noticed. Personal losses and struggles, of course. But also the killings in Paris and San Bernadino...the warmest December ever, again... demagogary on display in the presidential race, and proto-fascism sneaking in its' wake... Income inequality at levels not seen since before the Great Depression ...

Yes, we certainly have reasons for concern. But you and I and the others who belong to our church are also very lucky. Because if we come to church on Sundays, if we meet with others to work on a building project together, if we read newsletters

like this one or lead an RE class -- if we stay connected to the larger whole in some way, here's a blessing: those connections, that feeling of being held by something bigger than any individual, helps us to find our footing as we face the uncertain future together.

On our own, we can bobble and lose our footing, or stumble about like we're playing blind man's buff. But with the gentle hands of our community lightly touching our own, we feel grounded, we know better our place in this world. This loving, giving community is not perfect, but like a good person it is forgiving and generous. And so being a part of this faith community helps us focus on each day, helps us to be in the present with what is here

rather than buffeted by fears of bigger forces, worries about things we cannot control. In staying connected with our faith community, we also have the starting point for our own actions to help the world.

"Now is the moment of magic," Victoria Safford wrote. "And here's a blessing: we already have what we need." Thank goodness!

Office hours:
Tuesdays and Thursdays by appointment
Work cell: 781-767-7663
Pastoral emergencies: 781-850-3307

All Church Read - January 31st



Let's read a book and talk about it! Our common read will be the extremely well reviewed *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates, and we will meet on January 31 after the service to discuss the book.

Mr. Coates is a black author who writes beautifully about the hazards and hopes of black male life. *Between the World and Me* is written in the form of a letter to a black teenage boy. The boy is Coates's 15-year-old son, who is trying to make sense of blatant racial injustice and come to grips with his place in a world that refuses to guarantee for him the freedoms that so many others take for granted.

"I write you in your 15th year," Coates states in the early pages. "And you know now, if you did not before, that the police departments of your country have been endowed with the authority to destroy your body. . . . I tell you now that the question of how one should live within a black body, within a country lost in the Dream, is the question of my life."

You're invite to join in reading this book, and come to discuss it with others on January 31, at 11:30 am.

Executive Board Notes

Dear Friends:

The Executive Board had its last meeting of the year on December 17. Among other things, we discussed our upcoming Board retreat on January 10, at which we hope to take another step on the path toward a strategic plan. We are grateful for the collaboration and response we received from the congregation this past year, as we were working to develop our new vision and mission statements. Thank you for your engagement and support!

Informal in-home Potluck Dinners

Among the things we took away from our mini-retreat on November 1 was the desire of many members for more social contact within the congregation. This is what I told you in last month's newsletter:

"Many of the participants on November 1 expressed a desire for more informal fellowship among members and friends, for socializing, for camaraderie, for getting-to-know-each-other opportunities, preferably over food! Therefore, we are hoping to start a new series of informal in-home dinners in the New Year, a way of getting together that (I am told) was very successful some 15 years ago. It sounds like an old tradition that is worth reviving! We imagine friendly groups of 6-8 persons, talking to each other, about themselves and the world – not necessarily about anything related to First Parish (and certainly not about fundraising). And to cut down on the work for the hosts, the new incarnation will be in the form of potlucks – hosts will only be expected to provide a table and clean dishes. For families with young

children, babysitting will be provided at the vestry."

At the semi-annual meeting on December 6, I had planned to call for volunteers to organize these dinners, but because we had a lot to discuss and I wanted to end the meeting on time, I never got around to it. Hence this call today:



Volunteers Needed! We need three kind volunteers to stick their heads together and come up with a good way to organize these dinners. This will be a one-time, short-term commitment (not a future committee!) and will mainly consist of identifying folks who are willing to host a potluck dinner at some point this winter. If you are willing to help us with this, please e-mail me at ffleischmann@comcast.net.

On behalf of the Board, I thank you in advance for making this happen!

Support for Islamic and Sikh Congregations in our Area

An important moment at the semi-annual meeting: the congregation approved a motion from the floor to send a message of support to Islamic and Sikh congregations in our area, who find themselves under attack inspired by xenophobia and fear. It asked me to prepare a draft for the Executive Board, which was discussed at our December meeting, subsequently revised and improved by Darline Lewis, and approved by all Board members by e-mail just a few days before Christmas. It is scheduled to go out early in January. Here is the text:

We, the members of First Parish of Medfield, are concerned about attacks against members of your faith and against your places of worship, instigated by fear, bigotry and reckless demagoguery. In light of these troubling events, we feel called upon to affirm the principles of religious freedom and constitutional government that define the character of our country. We know that your freedom to assemble and to practice your religion peacefully and lawfully is also our freedom.

As Unitarian Universalists, we are committed to respecting the worth and dignity of all human beings, including those whose religious faith is different from our own. Therefore, our congregation has voted to extend to you this message of support and solidarity, as you

struggle to resist against offensive suspicions and outright misrepresentations. We believe that standing together strengthens our neighborhoods, our country and, indeed, our global family. We must convey friendship and love to one another, by engaging in dialogue which promotes mutual tolerance and understanding.

We send you our best wishes. If we can help to uphold our shared values of religious freedom, peace and love, please let us know.

The Board welcomes your thoughts and comments on this message.

With all good wishes for the New Year,
Fritz

For our Young People

Here's what's happening...



COA (Coming of Age) for grades 9-10 meets in the vestry from 7:00 pm-9:00 pm on: Sunday, January 3th and January 17th.

High School Our Whole Lives (HOWL) for grades 11-12 meets in the Vestry from 7:00-9:00 pm on: Sunday, January 24th

Youth Group for Grades 11-12 will be meeting on Sunday, January 10th at 9:00 in the Vestry.

Youth Groups Rock Climbing Adventure

The Youth Group went rock climbing in December with some assistance from funds that they raised at their Medfield Day Henna booth.



Notes from the Music Director



Dear Friends,

I hope you are all enjoying our mild winter. I just wanted to wish you all well as I begin my four and a half month sabbatical at First Parish Medfield, since I may not have seen each of you before I began it.

I wanted to thank the Executive Board for supporting my sabbatical, which I requested for several reasons. A few of those reasons include that I am in my third and final year of the Music Leadership Certification Program (MLCP), and the course work this year was very intense; I thought a period of rest, regeneration and reflection would be good for me as well as I tend to always be on the go; I also thought it would be a fitting way to celebrate my ten years of being Music Director here at First Parish Medfield. I will take some time to rest and relax and visit a few nearby churches to see some of my UUMN friends in action, including my MLCP mentor Shawn McCann who is the Music Director at First Parish in Groton.

I wanted to report that our third fundraiser, the New Life Concert, went extremely well on December 12th. Thank you so much to everyone who shared their talents and time. We had readings by Thea Iberall and Mary Corthell, Duncan Glover and Ron Yates who spoke on behalf of the New Life Home Refurnishing organization, and many beautiful performances, including the First Parish Medfield Choir, Becca, John *and* Rachel Kornet, Shirley Riga, Meg Fisher, Fritz

Flesichmann, Trills 'n Chills vocal group, Medfield Sing-Off winners Cole Foster and Matthew McGrory, Julia Adrian, Larry and Sonia Kramer and the local gem, concert pianist David McGrory, who gave an incredible performance. Volunteers Louise Rachin, Susan Stromgren and Jen Bartle among others, created a lovely, inviting reception, and many people stayed afterwards for desserts and conversation. We raised about \$1,000 for New Life Home Refurnishings, thanks to a good attendance and some extra generous donations.

Vinh Pham is my replacement at First Parish while I am gone, a pianist from Vietnam who studied at the Longy School of Music (my *alma mater*). He teaches at the Merry Melody Music Academy, the company of former FPUU Music Director Vivian Tsang. He is very friendly, so I hope you will say hello.

Thank you very much for your continued support and appreciation of me and my music leadership at First Parish Medfield. Your gifts of the beautiful orchid, thoughtful card and generous gift certificate were very touching and greatly appreciated. I will look forward to seeing you all again when I return from sabbatical on May 1st, and I hope you will all mark your calendars for Music Sunday on May 8th!

Happy New Year!

Eva Kendrick

Introducing Vinh Phan



Originally from Vietnam, Vinh Pham received his Bachelor Degree in Piano Performance from the Longy School of Music of Bard College, where he also holds a Teaching Artist Certificate. Vinh is an experienced accompanist and soloist who has performed in multiple recitals, showcases, and chamber concerts at Longy. Vinh studied with the great pianist and teacher Ludmilla Lifson, Piano Pedagogy with Esther Ning Yau and Chamber Music with Carol Mastrodomenico, Mihail Jojatu, Jane Struss and Marco Granados.

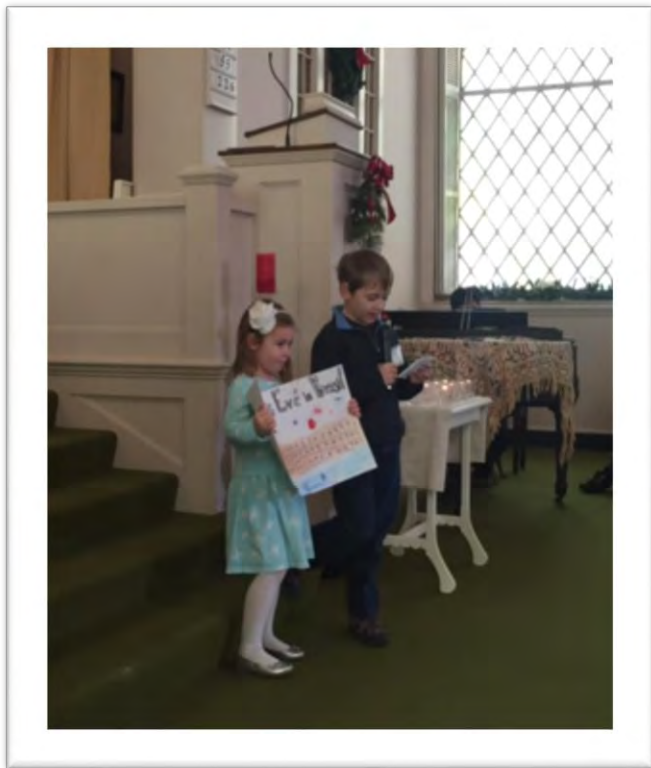
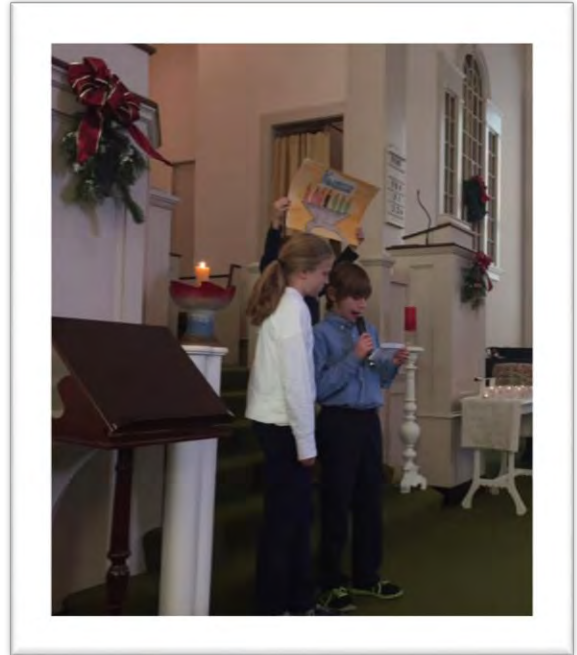
We are extremely lucky to have Vinh with us until Eva's return on May 1st.

Welcome Vinh Phan!

Welcome

Solstice Service

Here is a few photos from the Solstice Service that was held on December 20th.



Expresso Yourself Coffeehouse at the UU



In February, we will be starting the Expresso Yourself Coffeehouse as a welcoming venue for poets, storytellers, and singers to present and share their writings.



Everyone is welcome to participate or listen, in particular high school students, college students, and adults. Each month we will be a featured reader along with open mic readers.

Refreshments will be available.

We will need help with publicity, promotion, outreach, logistics, curating, procuring refreshments, and managing the door. If you are interested in helping out, please contact Rev. Meg Soens at minister@firstparishmedfield.org.



January Coffee Hour Host Schedule

Thank you Sara Drumm for being the Coffee Host Coordinator for January. Please contact Sara if you are interested in hosting a coffee hour on 1/10, 1/24 or 1/31.



Christmas Eve Candle Light Service Donation

We are pleased to announce that a check for \$359.50 was sent to Family Promise Metrowest following the Christmas Eve Candle Light Service.

Family Promise Metrowest is a cooperate, interfaith partnership offering hope to homeless families with children by providing shelter, meals, and supportive case management as they seek permanent housing.

Buildings and Grounds Update



Thanks to all who help keeping our historic buildings in good shape.

This Fall, the Buildings and Grounds Committee got some very welcome reinforcements. Nate Razza and Wesleigh Behn have joined the tiny but now growing B&G. Nate has started to strip the paint off the cement block front of the church so that it can be painted and regouted in the Spring. Wesleigh has patched and painted the damaged walls in the vestry and entry. More painting is planned.

Also, apprentice electrician Daniel Paisner has chosen to donate the 60 hours volunteer work needed for his certification to First Parish UU in Medfield. Daniel has already added electrical outlets to the balcony, has put a dimmer on the chancel lights, and added lighting to the organ room. There is a long list of other electrical work planned.

Thanks to Dan Bibel, Meg Soens, Margaret Rolph, Jeanette Ruyle and Susan Stromgren have helped out on work day projects to keep up.

The B&G committee asks everyone at First Parish to help out. Let us know when you see needed repairs, and, when you can, help out on our periodic work days.

Thanks and Happy Holidays

Buildings and Grounds Committee
Wesleigh Behn, Fred Bungler, David Maxson, Nate Razza and Eve Potts



Flowers Needed for the Sanctuary

Would you like to have a loved one remembered at our

Sunday service? Your donation of flowers would be greatly appreciated. Sundays in January are available. Please contact Rebecca Stephenson 508 740-0663 or rgspt1@gmail.com

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 8:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Email: admin@firstparishmedfield.org
Sandra Andreassi-Administrator

Green Sanctuary Committee Report



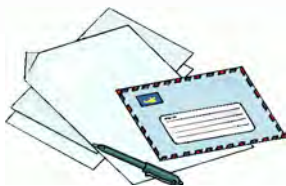
On December 12th, the historic Paris Climate Summit concluded with the recognition that it is imperative we keep global warming below a rise of 1.5 degrees C. Almost 200 countries are on-board. Bill McKibben from 350.org said, "Every government seems now to recognize that the fossil fuel era must end and soon." We at First Parish (along with people everywhere) must continue to do our part to help make this a reality.

At the local level, our anti-idling initiative to educate the drivers of Massachusetts is progressing. Members of the Green Sanctuary Committee taped a TV interview on Medfield Cable 12 which was aired in December. It will be accessible on their website. If you notice places where people are jumping out of their cars or sitting in them letting the engine run, let us know! Better yet, carry some flyers with you and hand them to people.

We also have information about renewing with Viridian for green sustainable electricity that supports the UU.

At the systemic level, Green Sanctuary Committee members are participating in legislative action days, rallies, sustainable workshops, climate activist organizations, and attending documentaries. We are joining with members of other churches and synagogues to increase the volume of our interfaith voice. Contact Thea Iberall theaiberall@yahoo.com for more information.

Among Ourselves



If you'd like to send a card to Jeff Lloyd, here's the address until at least January 3rd:

Jeff Lloyd
Brigham and Women's Hospital
Room #51, 4C
75 Francis St
Boston MA 02115

Also, the helping hands website for the Lloyd family is up and running once again. Anyone who was on the site the last time around is still there. If anyone else would like to join the site, Please contact Becca Kornet.

Supporting FPUU through Amazon.com and Equal Exchange



There are many ways to support First Parish - becoming a member is one, volunteering is another. But you can also help by buying things through Amazon.com or by getting your coffees, teas, and chocolates through Equal Exchange.



Getting the things that you would ordinarily order anyway, but using the links available on our website will let you do your part in supporting the work of this congregation, helping our social action agenda, and preserving our historic Meeting House.

**Just go to Firstparishemedfield.org
and click on the link at the bottom of any page!**

Food Cupboard Donations Needed



The Medfield Food Cupboard thanks you for your on-going support. Your continued efforts help us to maintain a huge service that would be so difficult to maintain without your generosity.

The following are the Medfield Food Cupboard current needs:

Canned Chicken

Pasta Sauce

Jam/Jelly

Raisins

Fruit Cocktail

Juice-Large and juice boxes

Single serve Applesauce

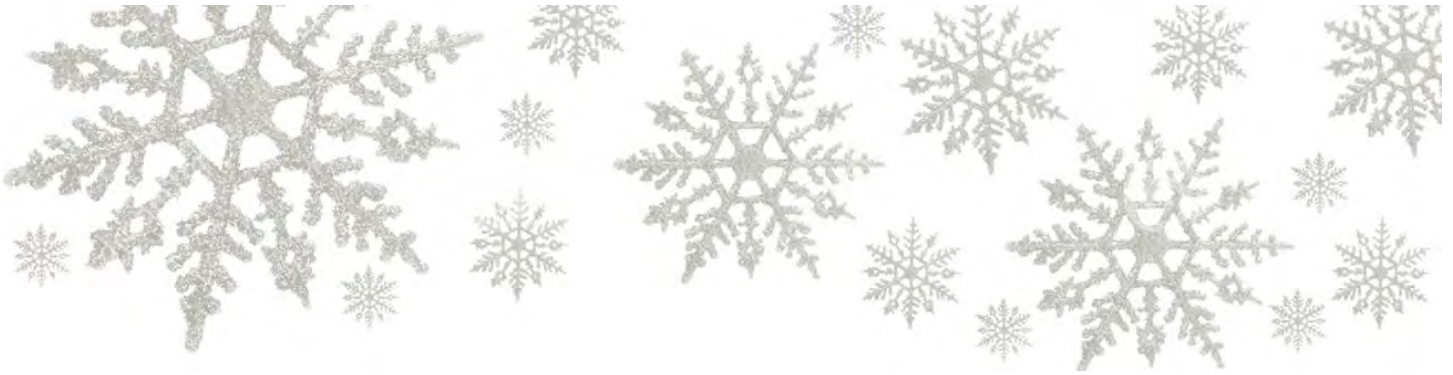
Cookies

Salty Snacks

Kid Friendly Cereal

*******Due to generous donors, we are not in need of dry pasta, soup or green beans at this time*******

FPUU Calendar of Events



Sunday, January 3	COA/7:00 pm/Vestry
Tuesday, January 5	Pastoral Care Committee Meeting/7:15 pm/U-House
Sunday, January 10	Executive Board Retreat Chalice Circle/4:00 pm/U-House Youth Group/7:00 pm/Vestry
Tuesday, January 12	Brown Bag Lunch/12:00 pm/Minister's Office
Thursday, January 14	Worship & Music Committee Meeting/7:15 pm/Vestry
Saturday, January 17	NewLife Home Refurnishings/Volunteer Day
Thursday, January 15	Executive Board Meeting/7:30 pm/U-House
Saturday, January 16	NewLife Home Refurnishings/Volunteer Day
Sunday, January 17	Anti-Racism in the 'burbs/2:00 pm/Vestry COA/7:00 pm/Vestry
Tuesday, January 19	Committee on Shared Ministry/7:00 pm/Minister's Office
Thursday, January 21	Executive Board Meeting/7:30 pm/U-House
Sunday, January 24	Newsletter Deadline HOWL/7:00 pm/Vestry
Sunday, January 31	All-Church Read/11:30 am/Vestry