



First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Medfield

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*O, wind, if winter comes, can spring be far
behind? ~Percy Bysshe Shelley*

March 2016 Newsletter

From the Minister

I look at the oak and pine trees outside, and wonder, what will March bring? February was confusing: sometimes it felt like deep winter and at other times like late April.

February might have felt a bit confusing in other ways for church members, too. Strong differences of opinion about a couple of topics surfaced on the Agora listserv. These concerned the black lives matter banner, and the roles of the minister, the board and the congregation in church governance. Underneath these two particular issues, erupting up through them, flowed the larger issue of *conflict*

and how we handle it.

This doesn't surprise those of us who participated in the recent development of the vision and mission statements. *Conflict* was the topic that came up most frequently in that process over the past two years. Some people were uncomfortable with how differences in opinion had been handled during two earlier conflicts, about the new church sign and the order of service 'welcoming statement.' Others felt that other differences (theological, fund-raising related) had also not been handled in fully loving and respectful ways,

leaving painful residues.

The executive board and the committee on shared ministry are going to work with the congregation on dealing with these issues, and I will be helping as well.

As for the banner, it's clear to me now that we really need to have an in-person conversation about what the words "black lives matter" mean to different people. People who are upset with the "black lives matter" banner and people who support it can speak and listen to each other, and think *together* about these things. I am confident that what the congregation as a whole thinks about these words, and what happens to the banner itself, will emerge organically out of the conversations that the executive board is organizing.

And what is my role? Ministers have a balancing act. We must support the congregation as it works to discern its path forward, *and* we must challenge it to live out its values. We risk polarization if we overly emphasize advocacy. But if we don't challenge congregants to live up to their values, then we risk spiritual inertia, and abandon our responsibility to foster spiritual growth.

I try to balance these things. I intend neither to wash my hands of the banner that I hung with the blessing of the executive board a year ago, nor will I fight to keep it hanging. Rather, I will do my best to help the congregation and the board process the meanings and implications of "black lives matter" and the banner, and help them discern what the best thing to do now is.

The discussion about polity and the roles of minister, board and congregation is an important one to have, too. We made a good start on that in mid- February. This is a very typical and healthy conversation for a church like this one that is no

longer a "family"-sized church, but is nevertheless a small "pastoral"-sized one.

Given the history of our congregation and what I am learning now, the most important thing I can do is help the congregation explore what loving, respectful communication on difficult issues means, and to address the more general issue of healthy communication during times of conflicting opinions. This is a real opportunity for the church, and for myself, to learn how to better use conflict as opportunity for growth.

These are among the questions I hope the congregation will address:

1. How can we do a better job of communicating directly when we have a concern? This is axiom one of healthy communications for groups.
2. How can we help each other speak respectfully and caringly to each other across differences? What could we do as an institution to make that easier for each other?
3. How can we, how can I, help people feel better about taking responsibility for reaching out to leadership or the minister when they have a grievance? What changes do I need to make so that can be easier? What changes could we as an institution make so that would be easier for people?

The Committee on Shared Ministry plans to seek your ideas on these matters. I look forward to hearing your thoughts about this, and to being part of these various conversations with you.

Many blessings,
Rev. Meg

Notes from the Executive Board



Dear Friends:

The Executive Board had its second meeting of the year on February 18. Among the things we discussed was the conversation after the service on February 7, occasioned by the Agora exchange of opinions about the porch banner. At that meeting, I announced that there would be two follow-up conversations. The first one of these, about the meaning of the words on the banner, is now scheduled for **Sunday, March 6, at 11:30.**

We also discussed a draft budget for next year, since the board every year must set a target for the annual fund drive, once again valiantly headed by Duncan Glover. I am sure you have all received his invitation for the evening of entertainment on **Saturday, March 12.** I look forward to seeing many of you there!

By the time this reaches you, you may already have attended the first evening of our new coffeehouse series, "Espresso Yourself." If not, you may want to make a note in your calendar for the last Saturday of this month (March 26).

See you at the meetinghouse!
Fritz

Green Sanctuary Committee

Submitted by Thea Iberall

If you care about the environment and the future, there is an opportunity to take part in various

climate activities. There will be a screening of the *Merchants of Doubt* on March 6th at Beth El Temple Center in Belmont at 1:30 pm. Based on the book of the same name, the film exposes the use of public relations tactics to confuse and discredit established science in order to prevent government regulation of the tobacco, flame retardant, and fossil fuel industries. In so doing, the movie explores the roots of climate change denial. Peter Frumhoff, Director of Science and Policy at the Union of Concerned Scientists will introduce the film and lead the discussion that will follow.



Then on March 13th is the Local Environmental Action Conference at Northeastern University Curry Student Center. Sponsored by Massachusetts Climate Action Network and the Toxic Action Center, the keynote speaker is Jane Kleeb, the Keystone XL pipeline fighter and visionary founder of Bold Nebraska. A wide range of workshops to help you hone your community organizing skills and learn about pressing environmental issues.

<http://www.localenvironmentalaction.org/>

The Green Sanctuary Committee will be co-sponsoring a screening of the film *This Changes Everything* at the Millis Library on March 18th at 6:00 pm. This documentary, based on Naomi Klein's book of the same name, weaves together threads of climate, racial and economic injustice and the movement of movements already rising for a new, non-extractive economy. I've seen it and it is an important film.

As a reminder, please put the April 25th Medfield Town Meeting on your calendar to help approve steps so that Medfield can become a Massachusetts Green Community.

AN EXCITING CHALLENGE: 2016-17 ANNUAL FUND DRIVE

Matching Gifts Pool



The Annual Fund Drive Committee has exciting news to share! We are pleased to announce that First Parish Medfield Members and Friends have a chance to not only reach but also exceed our 2016-2017 Annual Fund Drive goal!

In addition to their annual pledges, several members have offered to contribute additional funds to a *Matching Gifts Pool*. The purpose of the *Pool* is twofold: (1) to encourage existing pledgers to increase their pledges; and (2) to then match their pledge increases so as to raise their total value. To date we have *Matching Gifts Pool* commitments totaling \$5,050 from members of the Executive Board, the Annual Fund Drive Committee, and those who pledged in the first Quartile last year.

Here's how it works:

Example 1: If a pledge is at least \$100 - \$249 more than last year, **50% of the pledge increase** will be matched from the *Pool*.

Example 2: If a pledge is at least \$250 or more than last year, **100% of the pledge increase** will be matched from the *Pool*.

How Much Should You Pledge?

Your pledge in any amount is greatly appreciated. However, the UUA Fair Share Guide is a helpful resource for determining your pledge amount. The financial commitment levels in the Guide are suggestions, with a starting point of 2% of adjusted

income for congregants earning up to \$1,000 per month, with giving levels rising with capacity as follows:

- **Supporter:** The congregation is a significant part of my spiritual and intellectual life that I want to support. My fair share financial commitment starts at 2% of my income and rises to 6% as my income and capacity rise.
- **Sustainer:** The congregation is my central community; I am committed to sustaining the programs and ministries of my congregation. My fair share financial commitment starts at 3% of my income and rises to 7% as my income and capacity rise.
- **Visionary:** My commitment is a clear demonstration of the unique importance of this congregation and of my spiritual principles. My fair share financial commitment starts at 5% of my income and rises to 9% as my income and capacity rise.
- **Transformer:** I am deeply committed to the congregation; my contribution provides fuel for transformation and is part of my spiritual practices in living out my UU Principles. My fair share financial commitment represents 10% of my income.

We believe that if all of us pledged a minimum of 2% of our household incomes we would balance our budget. Last year (2015-16), the total pledge was \$113,135 from 54 households. The average pledge was \$2,095. This year, we can balance the 2016-17 budget with \$5,000 funding of capital reserves if the average pledge is increased by 16% to \$2,424. Hopefully we will realize the goal of a balanced budget thanks to all our pledges and the multiplier effect of the *Matching Gifts Pool*.

Kind Regards,

Annual Fund Drive Committee: Mary Corthell,
Chris Flaherty, Duncan Glover, Louise Rachin &
Marshall Sugarman

Notes from the Music Director

Eva Kendrick



Dear FPUU Friends,

I wanted to send a note half-way through my sabbatical to share some exciting news! I have been appointed by the

Unitarian Universalist Musicians Network to join a Task Force, made up of five UUMN members, three of whom are board members and two, including me, who are currently in the Music Leadership Certification Program, administered through the UUA. This is the mission statement of the Task Force:

The UUMN Task Force is a leadership team charged with the task of seeing through the transformation of the UUMN from an informal network of UU musicians to a peer-reviewed, professional organization. The Task Force, made up of three board members and two credentialed musicians, will work with the UUMN Board of Trustees and an independent leadership consultant to develop a 5-year strategic plan.

It was an honor to be appointed since I have never served a leadership position in the UUMN, and it has been very exciting to be on the front line of this new venture. I have also been busy finishing my third and final year of work for the MLCP. I expect to receive my certification in June.

I miss you all, although I have been enjoying this welcome sabbatical on the 10th anniversary of

being your Music Director. I look forward to seeing you again on May 1st!

Eva

For our Young People

Here's what's happening in March!

COA (Coming of Age) for grades 9-10 meets in the vestry from 7:00 pm-9:00 pm. We will meet on March 6th and on March 20th

Bill Wians will be our private docent on Sunday, March 20th for our trip to the MFA. Bill will lead us on a discovery of religion in art, great inspiration for discussion and reflection! We'll leave after the service and return mid-afternoon. If you're not a member, town libraries have passes you can reserve (free admittance for those under 17).



HOWL (High school Our Whole Lives sexuality program) for grades 11-12: Meets on the 4th Sunday of the month. HOWL will be meeting on Sunday, March 27th at 7:00 pm in the Vestry.

Youth Group for Grades 11-12: The Youth Group typically meet on the second Sunday of the month. Youth Group will be meeting on Sunday, March 13th.



BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!
COME TO THE FIRST PARIS OPEN MIC CABARET!!



FIRST PARISH ANNUAL FUND DRIVE EVENT
SATURDAY MARCH 12, 6:30 PM
SING OR PLAY A SONG... RECITE A POEM...TELL A STORY...
OR JUST LISTEN & ENJOY BUT...

**Please Join Us in the Vestry for an Evening of
Phenomenal Music, Food & Fun**

**Featuring Jazz Pianist
Joel Larue Smith**

Mr. Smith, founder of the Joel Larue Smith Trio and Director of the Jazz/Big Band at Tufts University has toured extensively throughout the world performing at Royal Albert Hall in London, The White House, Lincoln Center and Boston Symphony Hall. He will be joined by Boston Songstress/Mistress of Ceremonies Donna Brescia.

RSVP by 3/1 with number of attendees to 508-528-8456 or duncanglover@comcast.net. You may also contact Duncan should you wish to reserve an open mic time slot or to provide sheet music.

Free-will donation to cover the musicians' costs: \$10/person



EXPRESSO YOURSELF COFFEEHOUSE

March 27th at 7:00 PM

Our first Espresso Yourself Coffeehouse in February was a huge success and we look to March 27th being even better.

Our theme for this month is "Coming of Age." We've all done it in so many ways -- share your story or poem or song about your experience.



We'll be featuring Cheryl Perreault, writer, published poet and spoken word artist. The host of *Wake Up and Smell the Poetry* in Hopkinton, MA, Cheryl uses spoken word to increase wellbeing through mind, body and soul. Her work is featured on two CDs collaborating with guitarist Steve Rapson. Cheryl's witty and emotionally riveting writing embraces themes of the human condition.

Espresso Yourself Coffeehouse is the last Saturday of the month at 7pm, open to all including high school students and adults.

Invite your friends and come join in on the open mic (5-minute limit) or just listen.





APRIL 9TH

SMALL SUPPERS

Saturday, April 9 is the date for our “small suppers” event. The idea is hold several pot-luck suppers, each at the home of a member, for a small number of people - usually 6 people, including the hosts.

You can sign up to be either a host or an attendee. As a host, you can specify the maximum number of attendees, usually 4, the time - 6:30pm is typical, and also set the guidelines for the potluck - one person to bring dessert, another a main course, etc.

If you sign up to attend, you’ll be assigned to a host, with the goal of mixing newer people with “older” members. You bring a dish to share and enjoy an evening getting to know some other church members in a small group.

To sign up, you can email either: Margaret Rolph merolph@verizon.net (phone 508-641-3251) or Jessica Razza jessicarazza@aol.com .

Specify whether you’d like to be a host or an attendee. There will also be a sign- up sheet at coffee hour over the next weeks.

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

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 Firstparishmedfield.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:

Pasta Sauce

Rice

Fruit Bowls - individually packed

Cans of Fruit Cocktail, Peaches, Pears

Jelly/Jam

Single Rolls of Paper Towels

Peanut Butter

Canned Chicken

Kid Friendly Cereal

Juice- Large or Boxes

Cookies/Salty Snacks

FPUU Calendar of Events for March

Tuesday, March 1	Pastoral Care Committee Meeting/7:15 pm/U-House
Saturday, March 5	Youth group Sleepover/Vestry
Sunday, March 6	Follow-up polity meeting/11:30/Sanctuary Annual Fund Drive Training/Noon/Vestry COA/7:00 PM/Vestry
Monday, March 7	Medfield Historical Society/7:00 pm/Vestry
Tuesday, March 8	Brown Bag Lunch/12:00 pm/Minister's Office
Thursday, March 10	Worship & Music Committee Meeting/7:15 pm/Vestry
Saturday, March 12	Annual Fund Drive Kickoff Dinner/Vestry
Sunday, March 13	Chalice Circle/4:00 pm/U-House Youth Group/7:00 pm/Vestry
Tuesday, March 5	COSM/7:00 pm/Minister's Office
Thursday, March 17	Executive Board Meeting/7:30 pm/U-House
Saturday, March 19	NewLife Home Refurnishings/Volunteer Day
Sunday, March 20	Newsletter Deadline Anti-Racism in the 'burbs/2:00 pm/Vestry COA/7:00 pm/U-House
Saturday, March 26	Expresso Yourself Coffeehouse/7:00 pm/Vestry
Sunday, March 27	HOWL/7:00 pm/Vestry

