



The Parishioner

News of the First Parish in Bedford
Unitarian Universalist
On the Common, Bedford, Massachusetts

Spirit...Justice...Community...

Volume 54, Issue I

September 2020

Rev. John E. Gibbons, senior minister
Rev. Annie Gonzalez Milliken, parish minister
Rev. William F. Schulz, affiliate community minister
Deborah Weiner, interim director of religious education
Sarah Klockowski, youth coordinator
David Southard, parish board president

Carla Bradford, editor
Bradford Conner, music/choir director
Janet Welby, youth choir director
Robert Noble, organist
Joan Petros, parish administrator
Katie Johnson, administrative asst.
Joe Perriello, sexton

Inside this issue:

Updates from Ministerial Team	2
Ministers' columns	3
Board Matters	4
Bedford Lyceum	4
Small Group Ministries	4
Faith Development Program	5
SRC Grants & Share the Plate	5
Music & Choir Notes	6
Testing Tuesdays at FPB	6
From the FP Treasurer	7
Green New Deal Book Disc	7
Action Reflection Circles	7
Online Church Directory	8
Women's Book Group	8
Transylvanian HS Scholarships	8
Sanctuary Funds Needed	9
Access for ALL	9
Caring Network	9
Auction of David Moore's works	9
Wheel of Life & Parish Nose	10
Virtual Water Ceremony	10
Ranked Choice Voting Workshop	11
From a FP UUA GA Delegate	11
Ways to Stay in Touch	12

Upcoming Sunday Services*

*All via Zoom - See www.uubedford.org/worship/upcoming-services/

Sunday, September 6: NO SERVICE - Labor Day weekend

Sunday, September 13 at 10:00AM

Ingathering and Renewal!

Here we go again! Of course, we'll be joined by (pre-recorded) performances by aerialists Alexis and Molly of the Boston Circus Guild, home-grown bagpiper Joanne Glover, welcoming remarks by Board President Dave Southard, and staff members, John, Deb, and Annie. Note Annie's instructions about submitting selfies with water for our annual Water Ceremony (see p. 10). Streamers too!

Sunday, September 20 at 10:00AM

"Choose Something Like a Star (or a Planet, or a Grain of Sand)"

Rev. John Gibbons preaching

Sunday, September 27 at 10:00AM

"The Blessings of Naiveté"

Rev. Annie Gonzalez Milliken preaching

We are living in impossible times. And sometimes the best way to do impossible things is to be a little bit naive about how hard they are going to be. How can we harness the blessings of naiveté in a cynical age.

Sunday, October 4 at 10:00AM

Rev. John Gibbons preaching



**Next deadline
for submissions
is Sept. 27th**

The Parishioner is published monthly. Deadline is generally the last Sunday of each month. Send submissions to: editors@uubedford.org.
PHONE: 781.275.7994 E-MAIL: office@uubedford.org WEB: www.uubedford.org ADDRESS: 75 The Great Road, Bedford

Updates on health, safety, and our worshipping community

Dear beloved members and friends of First Parish in Bedford,

As the new church year begins, we want to update you on our current thinking regarding our plans for the health and safety of our congregation.

This continues to be a challenging time for all of us. As the pandemic goes on, COVID safety has become an increasingly confusing and politically-charged topic. With some folks in our country refusing to take any precautions at all and others still avoiding other people at all costs, the spectrum of behavior we are seeing is wide. We want our values and safety to guide us forward. What are our First Parish protocols for this fall?

1. We will not gather in ways that exclude people.

Our UU values call us to equitable and compassionate behaviors and toward inclusion and fairness. For worship and any other large gatherings we will remain a virtual congregation, at least through the end of January 2021. We strongly encourage small group ministries, committees and other groups to also choose virtual gatherings over those held in-person when they would exclude vulnerable people in our community.

2. If we gather in smaller groups, we will meet outdoors and use social distancing and masks per CDC guidelines.

If a group of First Parish members feels safe gathering outdoors using social distancing and masks – and can be inclusive of all in that group – then we will feel free to do so with these safety practices in place. (Examples might include a committee having a backyard meeting or a youth group holding a BYO picnic on the Common.) In these events, we ask that the community takes care to balance our need for connection with sound public health practices of our community, knowing that both matter.

3. We will stay flexible and listen to your needs and concerns.

We know that the COVID-19 pandemic is shifting and changing. Our Leadership Team (comprised of our ministry staff, administrator, Treasurer, Parish Council Chair, and Board President), will continue to listen to your thoughts and needs, and will make and change decisions as necessary. Our goal is to continue to reflect the values and mission of First Parish in Bedford in all we do and say.

We remain proud of our work with the Bedford Research Foundation to carry forward COVID-19 testing in our narthex. We are gratified each time we've seen or heard from you, as you carry forward your values on the Town Common, the streets of Boston or elsewhere; as you shout with compassion that Black Lives Matter. We are encouraged every time you post a message that continues the fight for justice and equity; to save our environment; to free those held in captivity; to create a society that lives up to the best aspirations of this country. Please, do not lose faith – we must continue this work with renewed passion and drive.

This is hard, friends. We miss the hugs, the live music, the sound of children in our hallways, the clasping of hands in solidarity. Joy does not transmit as easily through a computer screen or a phone line. But we are a people of resilience and justice, grit and grace. We will continue. Know that we are here, and not just in spirit. Keep staying safe and taking care of each other.

With love,
John, Annie and Deb

Rev. John Gibbons, Senior Minister
Rev. Annie Gonzalez Milliken, Minister of Faith Development
Deborah Weiner, Developmental Director - Faith Development for Children

Common Thoughts

This is an old story: A young minister, just beginning, imagines a fanciful banner furling in the sky, exclaiming, "WIN THOUSANDS TO CHRIST!" As he aged, he adjusted his expectations and the banner then read, hopefully, "WIN *SOME* TO CHRIST!" Again, as he got still older, he realistically revised the imagined banner, "TRY NOT TO LOSE TOO MANY!"

Winning anyone to Christ is good, I suppose, but has never been central to our agenda, and yet I feel the truth of the story. At this point in the pandemic, my goal at First Parish is to TRY NOT TO LOSE TOO MANY!

It's a difficult time for us to remain connected to one another and yet I truly believe that now, more than ever, it's important that we make common cause with those with whom we share important progressive values and take action.

I've always wanted to grow this church. Recently I've come to know of three families who – Covid-motivated, partly – have decided to move away from Bedford and be closer to other family members. This is understandable. And I've now officiated at 4 zoom memorial services and 2 graveside services (none Covid-related). Annie too will be officiating at such services.

And, yes, we've had two new members, too, and I'm thankful but there is also a contraction happening.

In the stock market, this might be called "a correction" which is good – and indeed I think we're revising our expectations: We'll concentrate on what's essential and dispense with the non-essential. We'll be leaner and more focused.

We're a remarkably strong church: more than 400 members, our stewardship giving has exceeded our goals, our on-line attendance exceeds anything we'd expect in person, and we're stable in so many ways. Still, who knows what worship will look like in the future, or our program with kids and youth?

Bottom line: I am concerned. Let's TRY NOT TO LOSE TOO MANY! If you're able to invite friends to come to our zoom services, please do. If you've considered but not yet become a member of First Parish, now is an ideal time to affirm your participation. This signals a positive message to our future. Talk with me, please.

This is a hugely challenging time and we're called to rise and meet this existential moment.

Thank you for all you do for First Parish. I truly believe we have a salvific purpose: We save lives.

May we rise to the opportunities of these peculiar and perilous times.



Rev. John Gibbons

Minister's Musings

In the past, whenever someone I care about was confronted with overwhelming circumstances, I had a certain piece of advice I would give. "Zoom in and zoom out." This advice has now become an ironic pun in our pandemic life where all we do is zoom in – to work, school, church, family reunions and game nights. And we are all pretty dang zoomed out.

But puns aside, it is a good way to get through. Zoom in - as close in as it needs to be. Day by day, but maybe hour by hour, or maybe just this minute. This breath. Take one drink of water. Send one email. Get one child to brush their teeth. Just this evening alone in the apartment. Zoom in and do not think about the next day, hour, moment.

Zoom out - this too shall pass. Humans have survived so many unbelievable things: pandemics and civil wars and revolutions and drought and famine and slavery. We humans are wildly creative and resilient even as we are selfish and greedy. Zoom out – think of your ancestors and what they lived through and passed along to you. Think of future generations living in a different world, the one we create out of all this mess.

Right now, I am doing a lot of both. I am zooming in, literally and figuratively to each meeting. Focusing just on this fall's faith development programming. This conversation, this next step. I am zoomed in on working with families to develop programming that works for our children and youth, zoomed in on getting us de-escalation training to be safer in our protests on the common, zoomed in on supporting faithful clarity about our values and consistent action. And I am zoomed out, dreaming into being the world I know is beyond this one, where we build economies of real care that stop destroying our only home, meet harm with transformation instead of punishment, move freely. I am remembering the ancestors both physical and spiritual who were brave against racism and fascism and illness and fear.

As we zoom in, despite being zoomed out, I urge you to do both on a spiritual level. Just this moment, this breath. The generations behind and before you. This is how we will continue to get through.

Annie
Rev. Annie Gonzalez Milliken



BOARD MATTERS

Welcome to the new First Parish 2020-21 church year! Whether that spirit of enthusiasm rings clear and true, or sounds dull and hollow, welcome!

As if embarking on another season of socially-distanced church and virtual worship services were not enough, I am here to acknowledge that this year will bring yet more change.

We are planning two retirements among our staff. Our supremely skilled and helpful Parish Administrator, Joan Petros, and our beloved Senior Minister, John Gibbons, will begin their carefully planned and keenly anticipated retirements in June 2021. We have mixed emotions. We are deeply humbled and grateful for their enduring dedication and commitment to this congregation. We will miss their constant and reassuring presence. And together with them, we will look forward to a new season.

As a congregation, we are fortunate to have had such devoted staff for so long a time. We must recognize this as a normal transition and indeed a healthy opportunity for renewal and growth. We will be looking for ways to express our appreciation and to wish John and Joan well, while also planning for a new era.

Beginning last spring, we gathered an Administrative Staffing Task Force to examine our office operations and draft a staff hiring plan. We will start putting that into effect this fall.

Calling a Senior Minister is a thorough process that begins by hiring an Interim Minister who specializes in helping congregations through this transition. The Interim Minister will be with us for two years and guide us through a deep discernment and national search. The immediate timeline is:

- December: Board President contacts UUA Transitions Team
- February: Interim Search Task Force formed (three people appointed by the Board)
- March – April: Interim Search Documents Packet prepared and submitted
- May: Candidates presented to congregation, offers returned
- June: Candidate matched to congregation
- August: Interim Minister begins

Working together, we'll get through this. Please contact any Board member if you would like to share your thoughts or get involved.

David Southard,
President, Parish Board

The Bedford Lyceum

*A Forum on the Arts, Spirituality,
Science, and Justice*
Ellen Scheiner, Chair

The Lyceum is Coming! Yes, this fall, we're bringing back the Lyceum – virtually via Zoom this time! Come join us for engaging presentations and discussions. It's a great opportunity to learn and share ideas.

Our first Lyceum will be held **Sunday, September 20 at 4:00pm** and will feature Dr. Ann Kiessling from the Bedford Research Foundation. Dr. Kiessling will provide an update on research & development of a **Corona virus vaccine**. Zoom information for this exciting talk is below. Feel free to share this information with your friends. All are welcome!

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83429685798?pwd=anAwBtRTnFGQzM4Tm5zTS8vd2ZxQT09>

Meeting ID: 834 2968 5798

Passcode: 116304

One tap mobile:

+13126266799,,83429685798#,,,,,0#,,116304#

By phone: +1 646 558 8656

Sample topics we hope to discuss in future Lyceums include: Cybersecurity; Volunteer vacations overseas; Improving policing in America; Sponsoring children overseas; and “American Comedy, Censorship, & Free Speech”.

We welcome additional speakers and your suggestions for future topics. Please contact Ellen Scheiner at ejscheiner@aol.com with your ideas for upcoming Lyceums.



Small Group Ministry

Small Group Ministries have been continuing with love and perseverance throughout these pandemic times. People have pushed through obstacles to get on zoom and be together. These groups are a wonderful way to stay connected to others at First Parish, receive emotional support, and wrestle with important questions. Most groups meet monthly and have structured discussions on a topic led by a facilitator from the group. If you would like to help form a new group or join an existing group, please contact Annie at agonzalez@uubedford.org.

A special note: a new group for dads whose kids are still at home is forming now. If you fit that category and might consider joining such a group, be sure to reach out to Annie note at agonzalez@uubedford.org!

“In Liminal Time” -

**Thoughts from Deborah Weiner – Developmental Director,
Faith Development for Children
*Ready or Not - Here we Go!***

I'm writing this at the end of the weirdest summer I can remember. A really hot summer where one day dripped into another, without much to break it up. I marked the days by what was growing in my garden...first the lettuces, then the patty pan squash and zucchini, now the tomatoes and the sprouts of radish and arugula which are part of the final planting for fall. But no big barbecues, no big trips, and very few gatherings on the Common that involved all or even most of you.

Ready or not, here comes autumn and with it, a faith development program that won't look like others you have experienced. We'll be having programs at different times during the week; different group configurations; testing out some teaching methods and curricula that are new or adapted to these times; and encouraging you to bring faith development into your homes – no matter what your family looks like or whether there are kids home with you right now.

It's a time for experimentation and venturing into new spaces and models, in the spirit of building shared community and collaboration. Right now, we're planning for faith development programming on Zoom with occasional socially distanced activities, provided health and safety protocols support it. We'll re-evaluate our decisions frequently, but by late November we expect to make a call about what our plans will be for February through June. And we'll go through this together: supporting one another, helping our children and youth engage in ways that work best for them under the circumstances.

The Faith Development Committee has been engaged in conversations with families in the church around the possibilities we see for programming this year – to understand your preferences and concerns - and is deeply committed to supporting the children and youth of this church through this time. We are planning on having one all ages worship service each month along with special events with artists and “imagers” and folk who can encourage creativity and journeys of the spirit in our kids – as well as additional age-specific programs.

So: what can you do right now? PLEASE register your children for faith development programs. **All kids must be registered to participate in any part of this church's faith development programming. [The form](#) is quick and easy to complete and there is no cost for registration** for those who are part of the First Parish community: Then: please pitch in to help if you can. No matter what your age – we welcome you and your time and talents.

So ready or not, here we go. I'm glad to be on this journey with you.

Faithfully, *Deb*

Faith Development Program



Registration
Information

NOW is the time to register your children and youth for First Parish's Faith

Development programs for 2020-2021. We're working to develop an interactive, creative program that will meet the safety and health guidelines of this time while engaging children and youth in fun programs that help build connection to our faith! Please take a moment now to register: <https://forms.gle/xrow9e4qjtjMW5DS9> Thank you! For questions, contact Deb Weiner, Developmental Director – Faith Development for Children: dre@uubedford.org

Social Responsibility Council Grants and Share the Plate Proposals for 2020-2021 Church Year

Once again, the Social Responsibility Council invites all parishioners to help determine the social justice causes we would like to support this year. For the last two years, the SRC has coordinated our Share the Plate selections. On the first Sunday of each month, we donate half the collection from that Sunday to a worthy cause selected by you. If your proposal is selected, we ask that you or someone from the organization you are proposing give a brief overview to the congregation during the service on the first Sunday. This year, we will begin the share the plate program on October 4th.

In addition to the Share the Plate program, the SRC also supports social outreach projects of education and awareness, service, and social action for organizations and agencies that you propose. We look forward to seeing your proposals!

Both Share the Plate and Social Action project proposals are reviewed monthly at regular SRC meetings. Applicants are encouraged to attend the meeting to ask or answer questions and to provide additional information. Full information about how to submit an application and appropriate forms can be found on the SRC page on the church website. For any other questions, contact this year's SRC chairperson, Marge Heckman at maheckman@gmail.com.



*As we work together for peace, let all war
and hatred cease. Let us live as one on this
land, lend each friend a helping hand.*

– Traditional Hebrew text
to *Zum Gali Gali*
(translation: Schwartz)

What a terrific summer of services we experienced! Thanks to one and all of those who stepped forward to present such a terrific array of thoughtful presentations with such variety.

For me, every year at First Parish is the start of a new adventure, and this year is one more adventurous than most. This September begins my 16th year at First Parish. **Robert Noble** and **Steve Sussman** are back as our regular keyboard players with **Bob & Fran Tyler** making regular appearances (as well as other pianists/instrumentalists making guest appearances). **Janet Welby** will continue to be our terrific director of the Youth Choirs and KidSing. Granted, all musical appearances may not be what we call “under normal circumstances”, but for now I rejoice these exceptional talents are all still part of First Parish’s fantastic musical team.

Here’s the music for upcoming Sunday services (all at 10am via Zoom) –

Sep. 13: For Ingathering, we’ll try to have things feel like our usual Ingathering experience, even if online. Bob & Fran Tyler will be joining us with a couple of great classic melodies. Eloise Carroll will welcome us with a song to make our hearts sing with her. Joanne Glover will be opening the service with a set of Irish tunes on the bagpipes. The combined adult and youth choirs accompanied by several First Parish instrumentalists will have your feet tapping with “Zum Gali Gali”. Finally, other exciting entertaining guests may show up as well and for the end of the service, think Mozart ... think Mambo! It will be so good to be together again!

Sep. 20: For this Sunday of all things celestial, Steve Sussman will be playing piano; Cynthia Mork will sing a solo. We’ll also play a video of American composer Randall Thompson’s moving anthem, “Choose Something Like a Star”.

Sep. 27: Robert Noble will be playing organ. Janet Welby and KidSing will make a virtual appearance. We look forward to their youthful energy!

It’s time to think about joining the adult choir? We meet each Thursday evening, sometimes we sing, sometimes we talk, sometimes we watch musical videos, but every time we share our stories and energy as we all deal with life’s present situations. If you’re interested, e-mail me at bconner@uubedford.org. There even may be a chance to participate in the creation of a couple of virtual choir videos. Let’s take advantage of the circumstances we’ve been dealt. Think about it!

Bradford Conner, Music Director

Youth Choirs

Yes, there will be Youth Choirs this church year! I’d like to invite our church youth to join our



choirs and ride this adventurous wave of creating music in new and interesting ways. I have been working with the software Adobe Audition and Premier Pro to learn how we can produce some choral music together for Sunday services. There will also be activities and camaraderie as we meet together at our usual choir Thursday afternoons:

KidSing (PreK, Kindergarten, and first grade):
3:30 - 4:15

Junior & Senior Youth: 5:30 - 6:30

If these times are slightly unavailable, do let me know as I can make some accommodations.

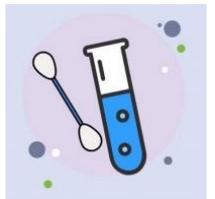
KidSing continued to meet this summer and we had a lot of fun. We also continued to learn some musical skills such as rhythm and solfeggi. I am in touch with some of you as we’ll be using our summer songs in a service on September 27.

All choirs will officially begin on Thursday, September 10.

Musically yours,
Janet Welby, FPB Youth Choir Director

Testing Tuesdays Continue!

Every Tuesday we continue to have Covid-19 testing at First Parish in collaboration with the Bedford Research Foundation. There are no walk-ins. Everyone pre-registers on-line:



<https://www.bedfordresearch.org/product/first-parish/>.

Tests cost \$95 (though insurance may reimburse). If cost is an obstacle and thanks to generous donors – we offer to subsidize anyone in need. EVERYONE may be tested, regardless of town of residence, affiliation, symptomology, or ability to pay.

Those who pre-register are given a number and a time-slot. Everyone waits in their car until called. It goes very quickly without hassle. Testing is nasal swab, not painful, and takes about 30 seconds.

NEW CHANGES: While we will call anyone who tests positive within 24 hours, results - positive or negative - will now be sent by email within 24-36 hours.

If anyone has questions: jgibbons@uubedford.org.

From Our New Treasurer

Thank you for the warm welcome I've received as your new treasurer. I appreciate your patience as I learn the job. The church is fortunate that Dee Russell and Maggie Debbie set up a robust, clearly defined process to handle the church finances that makes the treasurer's job very doable. We're still looking for an assistant treasurer to back me up.



Our process for paying bills/invoices has changed with our staff and treasurer working remotely. We must rely on the US Post Office to move the bills/invoices from the office to the bookkeeper for processing, and the checks from the bookkeeper to the treasurer for signature and mailing. Like many others, we are experiencing variability in the time it takes for the mail to get from point A to point B. We ask you to submit your bills/invoices and reimbursement requests promptly and we will process promptly. We're hoping the recent political pressure will lead to more reliable service. If you have concerns about a specific payment, feel free to contact Joan Petros or me at omigaw2@gmail.com.

~Vicki Gaw

Green New Deal Book Discussions

Join us for one (or both) of the following book discussions on the Naomi Klein book: "On Fire: The Burning Case for a Green New Deal." (Note: Zoom link to be sent out on the church announcement list closer to event):

Tuesday, Oct 20, 7:30-8:30pm

Sunday, Oct 25, 3-4pm

In the book, Naomi Klein makes the case for a Green New Deal, explaining how bold climate action can be a blueprint for a just and thriving society. She is a New York Times best-selling author and was the keynote speaker at General Assembly.

To order the book from the Environmental Justice Committee (EJC) for \$15, please fill out the following order form (or contact Corinne Doud cordoud@gmail.com):

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfWMrkIVrWZbu6WYBW79aOfvBjKBtzTdHAvYzbp4LjaPEw/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1>

If you order from EJC, please let Carol Reynolds (carolannbenoit@aol.com or 781-275-1347) know if you want to pick up book(s) at her home in Bedford, or if you live in Bedford and would prefer an EJC committee member deliver book(s) to your home. If those options don't work for you, check out your local library or bookstore to get the book. Thanks!

Corinne Doud,
for the Environmental Justice Committee

Assistant Treasurer Anyone?

We need help! We need someone to back-up our treasurer, Vicki Gaw. Might you be interested, or can you suggest someone? Lots of support and appreciation provided!

The task list below is based on the arrangement Dee Russell and Maggie Debbie used from 2016-2018 with the understanding the details will be negotiable. A person with some prior financial background either professionally or in volunteer roles might find the position something they would feel comfortable doing.

Here's what the role entails:

- Sign Checks (weekly) – Treasurer primary, Assistant secondary
- Ensure monthly reports are produced and perform monthly review – Treasurer
- Work with administrator and bookkeeper – Treasurer and Assistant
- Attend Board meetings (monthly) – Treasurer
- Attend Leadership Team meetings (monthly) – Treasurer primary, Assistant secondary
- Attend Endowment meetings (quarterly) – Assistant primary, Treasurer secondary
- Lead Finance Committee meetings (quarterly) – Treasurer primary, Assistant secondary
- Budget Preparation (February through June) – Treasurer and Assistant
- Review of ongoing finances of the church, including trend analysis – Treasurer and Assistant



If you're interested, want to suggest someone, or want to know more, email treasurer Vicki Gaw at omigaw@comcast.net.

Action Reflection Circles

We know these times require committed sustained courageous action in line with our values. But... what does that even look like? And are we doing anything effective? Rev. Annie will be starting some Action Reflection Circles this fall for folks who want some accountability and support around taking regular action for an issue you care about. We may start with one multi-issue circle or we may split based on interest or demographics if we have enough people.

Come to an info session on Tuesday, September 22 at 7pm on zoom or send Annie a note at agonzalez@uubedford.org to find out more!

Update on First Parish Bedford Online Church Directory



Soon, each member or friend of First Parish in Bedford will receive an email invitation to join the online church directory and select a secure password. Members/friends can review the contact information and make corrections and upload a family photo. The Membership Committee of First Parish in Bedford

has created this online church directory that will be password-protected for each church member who wishes to participate. Three First Parish member volunteers will oversee and administer the content of the directory available to our members, including the submission of photographs. The service is called "Instant Church Directory Online" and it can be viewed at:

<https://www.instantchurchdirectory.com/features/>

The Instant Church Directory Online allows each member or friend of First Parish in Bedford to create a login and password to securely access the directory. Our three directory administrators have input information about parishioners. For this coming church year, the three administrators are Nina Wampler, Mary Van der Mude and Webb Tilney.

If you do not want your contact information to be shared in this online church directory, please contact Nina Wampler via email at Nina.Wampler@gmail.com or by telephone at 720-933-8402.

The Instant Church Directory personnel are always making sure the Instant Church Directory website and databases are up to date with the latest security software to protect against any security threats. To ensure the directories are safe, they only allow access to members who are entered in the directory. For more information about the security policies of Instant Church Directory Online see: <https://www.instantchurchdirectory.com/security/> The cost of this online church photo directory is \$7.90 per month with a one-year contract. Funds to support this directory will come out of the Membership Committee budget.

We look forward to sharing this online church photo directory with each of you.

The Membership Committee:

Nina Wampler, Co-Chair, directory co-administrator;

Sarah Dorer, Co-Chair;

Webb Tilney, directory co-administrator;

Mary Van der Mude, directory co-administrator;

Marcia Morgan; Rich Suval; Ron Green

John Gibbons & Annie Gonzalez Milliken, Ministers

WOMEN'S book group

We start back up on Sunday, September 20 at 7pm. (Zoom info will be sent) with the book "Cane River" by Lalita Tademy.

The description on the Amazon website:

"Beginning with her great-great-great-great grandmother, a slave owned by a Creole family, Lalita Tademy chronicles four generations of strong, determined black women as they battle injustice to unite their family and forge success on their own terms. They are women whose lives begin in slavery, who weather the Civil War, and who grapple with contradictions of emancipation, Jim Crow, and the pre-Civil Rights South. As she peels back layers of racial and cultural attitudes, Tademy paints a remarkable picture of rural Louisiana and the resilient spirit of one unforgettable family."

The other books for the upcoming church year are:

Trick Mirror (Jia Tolentino) - October 18

The Alchemist (Paulo Coelho) - November 15

Book Swap - January 10

In Regalia (Erin McCormick) - February 21

Unaccustomed Earth (Jhumpa Lahiri) - March 21

The Tattooist of Auschwitz (Heather Morris) - April 18

The Book of Longings (Sue Monk Kidd) - May 16

The Giver of Stars (Jojo Moyes) - June 6

For information or with questions, contact Margaret Jackson at mjacksonfpb@yahoo.com.

Transylvanian High Schoolers

This September, as is our commitment every school year, sponsors from First Parish will send \$300 to each high school student from our partner village, Abásfalva, Transylvania, Romania. It's not easy to go to high school in Transylvania – there is no school past the fourth grade in the village. Our scholarships encourage kids to pursue their education.

Would you be a sponsor? We have eight scholars this year. We usually split the cost between two First Parish families, so your contribution would be \$150. To pledge or for more information contact Sharon McDonald, shar.mcd77@gmail.com.

Sanctuary Update: Sanctuary Funds Needed

For 29 months we've kept vigil to keep Maria safe. In person contact is not currently an option, yet we can support her and her family other ways.

Her devotion to her family is utmost on her mind. Her sons were working and paying most of their own expenses. But Covid-related unemployment, rent increases, and unexpected medical issues all mean higher costs.

Maria's sons are looking for new jobs, with guidance on job-searching skills, banking, and budgeting from a Sanctuary Committee member—so they grow in their ability to manage their own lives. Reliable internet/phone connections are necessary to apply for jobs and to respond to inquiries.

Current funds will be depleted at December's end at the present rate. Sanctuary Committee members have developed a plan for sustaining the family during this crisis. We estimate a need for \$20,000 to continue support for 6 months—January through June 2021.

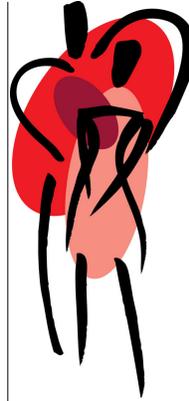
We're first looking to her "extended family," we who love her, to meet this need, to the ability that we can. Your gifts will sustain Maria while she continues to seek justice and her sons get fully on their feet. Checks can be made out to: First Parish Bedford, "Sanctuary" in memo line, mailed to 75 The Great Road, Bedford, MA 01730. All donations are tax deductible. Let's "join hands" and hearts to support our beloved Maria.

The First Parish Sanctuary Committee

Access for ALL

We've been having a pretty quiet summer. All of our energies are focused on figuring out a way for Zoom and closed captioning to get together, so that all of us can take part in whatever First Parish activities we may want to, without loss of hearing getting in the way. With the help of Dean Groves and Greg Carpenter, we're looking at options and will be asking some of you to serve as testers when we settle on a few products to try.

Lee Vorderer for Access for ALL



*Caring
Network*

September Caring Crew

If you or someone you know at First Parish needs temporary assistance with meals or errands, please let us know. We have a team of volunteers who are ready to help. The Coordinator for the month of September is Sandy Boczenowski. Reach her by phone: 781-222-4094 or email Sandy at sandyboz@gmail.com. Please

note that the phone number will remain the same every month to reach the current Caring Crew Coordinator, as we are now using Google Voice.

We would like to begin providing rides to medical appointments again as soon as we can be assured that we have a safe protocol for both the driver and the rider. Current thinking is that both will wear masks and any passengers will sit in the rear seat. If the weather allows, we would also recommend that the windows are open. If you feel comfortable offering your help as a driver to appointments, please email Sandy Boczenowski at sandyboz@gmail.com.

Hear Ye Hear Ye! Auction of David Moore's Works coming in the Fall!

*Good
NEWS*

That's right! David Moore has generously donated 17 of his works – did you see them highlighted in Janet Welby's "Loons" piece at the end of the "Music, Connection and Meaning" Service on August 23rd? These are modern art compositions inspired by travels to Ireland, Iceland, and the events and nature around us.

In lieu of generating money from live in-person concerts, David had donated his works to be auctioned off by the Music Committee with proceeds going to First Parish.

Details are still being worked out. Look for a special announcement in September!

The Music Committee

Wheel of Life

In July, John Gibbons officiated at a graveside service for parishioner *Pat Cumings* at Sleepy Hollow Cemetery... On August 2, John officiated at the memorial service for *Roy Hamilton*, father-in-law of our late member, Eleanor Merz. With tech help from Deb Weiner we had live webcam from their beloved Star Island... On August 22, John also officiated at a memorial service for long-time Bedford resident *Roger Wallace*, husband of Mary Baughman... And on August 29 there was a glorious memorial service for beloved member, former church president and treasurer, *Dee Russell*. Anyone who missed the service may email the church office for a link to the YouTube. Dee's name has also been added to our sanctuary's LegacyTree as one who has made a generous bequest to First Parish... Recently, Lorraine Smith and John Gibbons were present for the burial of *Don Smith's* ashes in our Memorial Garden... *Kenny Alexander*, son of Glynis Alexander (and grandson of Susan Moody, already in our Memorial Garden) will also be remembered there... Our thoughts are with Judy McCabe, John Robichaud and Courtney Little on the unexpected death of *Shane Little* in New Jersey... We note as well the recent death of our member *Bill Paul*, a CWV resident and former physics professor at Harvard. With John and Shea Smith, Bill regularly attended meetings of the Boston Committee on Foreign Relations in Boston.

Nina Wampler & John Doty report that daughter Emma gave birth on July 23 to Caroline Grace McBurney. Mother and baby are doing fine.

News from the Parish Nose

With lamentation and celebration *Cathy and Ron Cordes* announced their plan to move closer to grandchildren in Philadelphia... So too will *Sylvia Cowan* move closer to family in Montclair, NJ... And *John and Kathy Lewis* are making plans to move to Canada... *Kathy Barniak & Steve Robichaud* have also left Bedford and for now are living in Lakeville, MA... *Pam Herrick* has also decided to move from CWV to return to her beloved home in Orleans on Cape Cod... *Dot Ellis* fell from her back porch at Carleton-Willard, fractured a leg and is now recuperating at CWV... After incidents of uncertain origin, *David McClain* is having brain surgery this week... Work continues: following painting and landscaping projects, the parsonage deck is being replaced and much interior touch-up painting is happening at the church. Many thanks to *Brett Leida and Joel Parks* for their efforts!... After much wandering in the wilderness, *Susan Ebbs* hopes to move soon to Carleton-Willard Village... Congratulations to *Jim Smith* whose daughter, Aletha, both graduated from Stanford Law School and got married to her fiancé, Ellis, on June 14, in a very small outdoor ceremony in Seattle... Congratulations to Anne Bickford and Allen Marshall on the marriage of their son Evan to Molly Kazin in a backyard wedding in Wilbraham, MA... Congratulations too to *Deb Picciuto* on the 104th birthday of her mother, Clare!... *Sue McCombs* has been in and out of the hospital, now recovering... A note to the congregation from *Rachel Murphy* after recovering from Covid-19: "Your thoughts, your prayers, your caring, I cannot express how I feel. Thank you."



Virtual Water Ceremony

As the staff prepares for our ingathering service on September 13th we are excited and also really sad that we cannot be together on the common watching circus performers, sharing ice cream and greeting one another.



As we find our way into what virtual and Covid safe gatherings look like this fall, we are envisioning a water ceremony with a real water component and a digital component.

Real water

In the days leading up to the Sept. 13 Ingathering we will be offering a way for parishioners to add some of their water to a communal container outside the church so that we can create our annual sacred water, used to bless babies and solar panels and who knows what else. Look for instructions as the date gets closer.

Digital ceremony

During our ingathering on Zoom we would like to display a slideshow of pictures of the members of our community with some type of water in the photo. Did you go to a lake, ocean, pond, river or backyard pool this summer? What about your trusty faucet, has it kept you hydrated? Whatever water has been important to you lately, send me a photo with it. Selfies with glasses of water are just fine! Bonus points if you get your kids, grandkids and/or pets in the photo too. You can email it or text me at 309-310-2341. I'll send a few more pleas and reminders as we get closer to the service.

Here's one to get your imagination going, of Moira and Lucas in a canoe in Maine that I would soon join them in, only to get stuck in tall grasses that we had to get out and wade through while pulling the canoe with Moira in it.



Ranked Choice Voting Workshop?

Dear Faith leader and/or Person of Good will,

The Rev. Vernon K. Walker is a member of the social justice team at the Pentecostal Tabernacle in Cambridge, MA and is involved in work on the Yes on 2 campaign, which will appear on the ballot this fall. Rev. Walker would like to gauge interest from UU congregations such as ours regarding setting up a virtual workshop for community members to attend between now and the November elections to learn more about Ranked Choice Voting.

The UU Mass Action has endorsed the campaign. Below is a link to the organizations that have endorsed the campaign:

<https://voterchoice2020.org/endorsements/>

Below are links to general information about the campaign and to a more direct explanation of what Ranked Choice Voting is:

<https://voterchoice.org/>

<https://voterchoice.org/about-rcv/>

Rev. Walker has also published an op-ed in Commonwealth Magazine in June that explains what Ranked Choice Voting is:

<https://commonwealthmagazine.org/opinion/ranked-choice-voting-can-promote-equality/>

If you and/or other First Parish Bedford community members are interested in discussing the possibility of a virtual workshop to clarify this issue, please contact Rev. Walker (see below).

Rev. Vernon K. Walker,
Campaign Consultant, Voter Choice 2020
e :: vernon@voterchoice2020.org
p :: 215-307-9654
w :: <https://voterchoice2020.org>

Shop to Support First Parish

When you shop on Amazon.com, keep in mind that you can benefit First Parish through your online shopping at no additional cost to yourself. From the First Parish home page (www.uubedford.org), click on “Shop to support First Parish” under the “Quick Links” on the right side, then click on the Amazon Smile link. First Parish earns a commission on all purchases originated through this link all year round!

You can also go to www.smile.amazon.com and choose “First Parish of Bedford” as the supported charity.



From Our 8/30 Sunday Service by Delegates to Our UUA General Assembly: Kath McCafferty

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be one of your delegates at GA. It was a fantastic experience and I was so heartened by the very difficult work the UUA is trying to do.

In a Covenant and collective liberation workshop, I learned that Unitarian Universalism is a covenantal as opposed to a creedal or dogmatic faith. I have a simple personal covenant with First Parish: *I will do my absolute best to radically accept, support and unconditionally love you all. Because I love you, I will try to do my share of the work and give as much money as I can. I will never close my heart against you.* My covenant is not transactional. If I enter into it expecting a return it has no value. My hope is that with your help I can learn to be a better human. I hope I prefer growth to safety. But even my little covenant is sometimes only aspirational.

But what do we covenant to accomplish together? In other words, what is the point? What radical loving work can we do in the world?

I learned that most UU churches have a covenant that everyone commits to that describes the basics of what is important to their congregational life and what their values are. Sometimes it says how they will interact with the outside world as well. They seem to usually be a bit wordy and vague with too much emphasis on safety and not enough on justice.

I learned in a workshop on Covenants and Colonialism that even modern covenants can be exclusionary by what they omit. Would marginalized people see acknowledgement of the danger and precariousness of their lives in our covenant?

Early Unitarian covenants were specific about who was allowed to sign on, this established white male Christian supremacy, and the ghastly shadow of those power systems haunt and imprison us to this day. We can say everyone is welcome in the spirit of love, but is the reality marginalized peoples experience more like “you are welcome to assimilate”? We are trapped in and blinded and deafened by our privilege. We say we want diversity, but we only seem able to accept people who are capable of and willing to assimilate into the existing power structure.

What I learned at GA is that if we hope to become the diverse faith we say we want to be, we need to shut up and deeply and humbly listen to the marginalized people in our faith and in the world around us, and then act on what we learn from them. Otherwise Unitarian Universalism will remain the irrelevant faith no one has heard of, powerless prisoners of our own privilege, while others suffer and die for want of real allies willing to covenant with them. The only way we can hope to achieve collective liberation from the status quo of oppression is to center the people on the margins and de-center ourselves and keep doing it until *they* believe we can be trusted.

Important Info & Ways to Stay in Touch

While the church building may be closed to face-to-face events, the church community remains OPEN and ACTIVE!

The best way to stay in communication and involved in all that is happening is to be sure you are subscribed to the First Parish Electronic lists (www.uubedford.org/community-life/email-lists/) - especially the **ParishBiz** list. This Google Group sends out important messages from church staff and leadership. And for news for families with children and youth, we have the **uubedford-re** google group. If you are not subscribed, or need help in any way with subscribing to any of the lists, send an email to: uubedford-it@googlegroups.com.

The church website (www.uubedford.org) is updated regularly and contains lots of useful information.

The **Main Calendar** of events on the website (www.uubedford.org/main-calendar/) is also being regularly updated with listings of all virtual events happening within the First Parish community.

All events, including Worship Services, are taking place via the Zoom (www.zoom.us) platform. If your committee or group would like to meet remotely, contact the church office (office@uubedford.org) and Parish Administrator Joan Petros will be happy to get your meeting set up.

FP Bedford Sunday Services on YouTube



To find FPB services on YouTube: Go to the church website: www.uubedford.org.

The homepage has a list of quick links in a column on the right side. The fourth one down is titled "[Sunday Services on YouTube](#)". Click on this button and you will be taken to a YouTube search page set for FP Bedford services; however, they are not always in chronological order. To put them in such order look for a symbol in the upper left corner of the page labeled "FILTER", click on it and five columns will show, the right most being "SORT BY", below that click on the words "Upload date" and the order of the videos listed will change to show the latest service first and getting older as you go down the page. There will be a few videos of First Parish events other than Sunday services intermixed.

From the Video Team:

Bob Bass, Bob Batt, and John McClain

Here are some of the Zoom events coming up that can offer support and connection to you and yours.

(Note: Always good to check the [Main Calendar](#) and [website](#) in case any of these meeting links need to be changed.)

Day/Time	Event	Hosted by	Details
Sundays at 10am	Sunday Worship & Community Connections	FP Staff	https://zoom.us/j/936829478 Meeting ID: 936 829 478 by phone: 1-646-876-9923; use meeting ID 936 829 478#
Thursdays at 9:30am	Short Stories Discussion Group	Short Stories Group	Open to all – Each week a story is assigned and then is discussed on Thursdays. If you'd like to join in the discussion, email (office@uubedford.org) for the Zoom info
Thursdays, 3:30-4:15 beg. 9/10	KidSing	Janet Welby	Stay tuned for Zoom info
Thursdays, 5:30-6:30 beg. 9/10	Junior & Senior Youth Choirs	Janet Welby	Stay tuned for Zoom info
Thursdays at 7:30pm	Choir Check-in and Rehearsal	Brad Conner	https://zoom.us/j/197342633 To join by phone: 1-646-876-9923, meeting ID:197342633#