

# The Parishioner

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

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

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January 2021

**Rev. John E. Gibbons**, senior minister  
**Rev. Annie Gonzalez Milliken**, minister of faith development  
**Rev. William F. Schulz**, affiliate community minister  
**Deborah Weiner**, developmental director, faith development for children  
**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.

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**Next deadline for submissions is January 31<sup>st</sup>**

## Upcoming Sunday Services\*

\*All via Zoom - See [www.uubedford.org/worship/upcoming-services/](http://www.uubedford.org/worship/upcoming-services/)

**Sunday, January 10<sup>th</sup> at 10:00AM**

**"Imagine Where We Can Go!"**

*A Multigenerational Service led by  
Rev. Annie Gonzalez Milliken and Deborah Weiner*

The children's writer Shel Silverstein said,  
*"If you are a dreamer come in  
 If you are a dreamer a wisher a liar  
 A hoper a pray-er a magic-bean-buyer  
 If you're a pretender come sit by my fire  
 For we have some flax golden tales to spin..."*

What can imagination do for us when we're feeling like we're trapped in a box, or need a new way of thinking about life to survive? How can we unleash our inner creative spirit and set ourselves free? Come join us as we explore imagination through story, song and creative play!

**Sunday, January 17<sup>th</sup> at 10:00AM**

**"The History of Alphabetization and How We Might Put Things Back Together After This Shit-Show"**

*Rev. John Gibbons preaching*

Didja know telephones were originally sold in pairs so people could communicate with one another? Things are more complicated now. Thoughts about our alternative futures. I promise not to say the word *shit* in my sermon.

*Upcoming Services continued on next page—*

## Upcoming Services (continued)

**Sunday, January 24<sup>th</sup> at 10:00AM**

### “The Only Way is the One Being Born”

*Annual “Spirit of Democracy” Sermon honoring the legacy of the late Rev. Jack Mendelsohn*

*Rev. Elizabeth Nguyen guest preaching*

Elandria Williams, the late and beloved moderator of our Unitarian Universalist Association and an expert in cooperative economics and liberatory governance, wrote: "If you never get to feel democracy, you can never contest anything bigger than you. You need that to go on and continue." This past year and the many before it have seen an unprecedented number of betrayals, attacks, and experiments in democracy and governance – and our ability to truly feel it. Where are just democracies growing, thriving and being born? In the small, in the south and right here in our communities of spirit.

*Rev. Elizabeth Nguyen is a Midwesterner at heart, lives in Boston, and is learning all the time about liberation, solidarity, courage, and cowardice. She is the Immigration Bond Coordinator with the National Bail Fund Network and previously did faith-based justice work at the Unitarian Universalist Association and youth organizing. She is passionate about progressive organizing in the Vietnamese American community, building power across prison walls and feeding people.*

**Sunday, January 31<sup>st</sup> at 10:00AM**

### “Daring to Imagine”

*Rev. Annie Gonzalez Milliken preaching*

Sometimes we get so used to circumstances in our life or world that we forget there are other possibilities. It takes a certain kind of courage to imagine what we truly long for without getting lost in a world of fantasy. What can the spiritual practice of visioning do for us?

## The Bedford Lyceum

*A Forum on the Arts, Spirituality, Science, and Justice*

**Sunday, January 10, 4:00-5:00pm: “Forgery!”**

Scandal! Notorious Deeds! First Parish’s Bob Doud will speak on the forensic science of handwriting and forgery investigation. Bob worked with his father – a noted Forensic Document Examiner, Donald Doud – for a number of years. Bob will relate some of the high-profile investigations that he was involved in, including King Henry VIII’s will and the Howard Hughes cases.

Bob Doud is a Technical Marketing Director in the cloud security field and worked as an assistant to his father during high school and college. He and his wife have been First Parish members for 25 years and active on numerous church committees, including the Building Committee where he coordinated the 1999-2000 addition project. In his spare time, Bob enjoys working with and mentoring middle and high-school youth through various church programs and the Rotary RYLA program.

Come and enjoy this engaging presentation!

### Zoom Link:

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

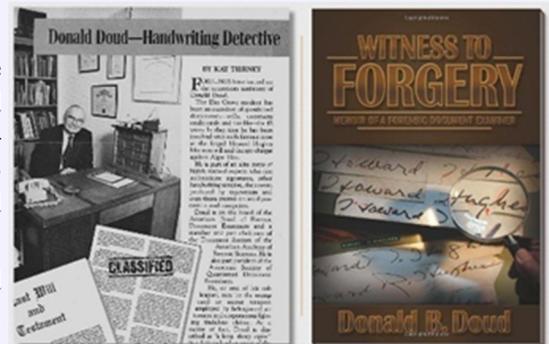
Meeting ID: 834 2968 5798 Passcode: 116304

One tap mobile: +13126266799,,83429685798#,,,,,0#,,116304#

By phone: +1 646 558 8656

Questions? Contact Ellen Scheiner at [mountainbreeze52@gmail.com](mailto:mountainbreeze52@gmail.com).

**\*\*All First Parish in Bedford Lyceums are FREE and open to the public.\*\***



## Common Thoughts

*(The following is a letter I recently sent to more than a hundred people who are connected to First Parish but are not members. In what I hope is a low pressure but direct way, I invite them to consider joining our church. Most of you who read this now are likely already members. Nonetheless, if you have friends or family members who might consider membership, would you also invite them, please? This is a most important time in the life of our church. I hope and believe this is not too much to ask of you. Thank you. —john)*

January 2021

Friends...

You're receiving this letter because, in some capacity, you're known to participate at Bedford's First Parish and because you are not currently a member.

This is a bold appeal for you to consider signing our Membership Book and become a member of First Parish. It's bold because we usually wait until people ask to become members. We don't proselytize. We trust your sense of your readiness, we trust your judgment, and we try not to pursue people.

Nevertheless...

I will be stepping down from this ministry in June 2021, five months from now. Annie Gonzalez Milliken will continue as Minister of Faith Development. Most probably, the congregation will have an interim minister for two years and then, we hope, there will be a settled senior minister. There's a lot to sort out, but I hope I stay out of the way of a new minister and perhaps eventually contribute appropriately.

Therefore now, I ask you to consider becoming a member so that First Parish can move into its future in as strong a position as possible. In choosing a congregation, prospective ministers look at many things: culture, compatibility, finances...and membership. I want to pass the torch with our flame as bright as possible.

The pandemic has battered all churches – financially, in membership, and in attendance. While First Parish seems stable (for now) and our Zoom attendance has been amazingly strong, it's not been to everyone's taste (nor mine) and the future is fragile. Several families have decided that now is the time to move elsewhere in the country and be closer to other family members. Though few are COVID-related, there have been a remarkable number of deaths. Zoom and isolation has pushed some folks into inactivity. Ironically, others at a distance or out-of-state have been able to participate virtually for the first time.

We report our membership to our denomination on February 1. I hope we may maintain or grow our membership



(currently we report 401 active members) but, as of now, our membership has diminished.

In our governance, membership is our only means of making big decisions: mundane but essential things like approving budgets, for example, and pivotal decisions like calling a new minister.

Thus, I ask that you consider membership as an expression of confidence in our First Parish future. For posterity, usually we have people sign our historic Membership Book with pen and ink. For now, we'll take your word for it and you can sign virtually just by saying you're ready. We hope that membership conveys feeling at home at First Parish, connection, and opportunities to be engaged according to your desire and ability. Growing our membership brings me joy and we hope that membership brings you joy also.

As always, I know that people look at membership in different ways and you may or may not be ready to take this step. If you're not, our respect and welcome remains undiminished. Please note that some long-standing friends of First Parish have never and will never join. We are grateful for their friendship nonetheless. Others belong to First Parish and to one or more other churches. Your many loyalties are also appreciated.

This appeal is intended to be direct but also low pressure. There's way too much pressure and anxiety in our lives today! As a member or as a friend, you are always welcome at First Parish. Come as you are!

In one of our several First Parish mission statements, we say that among our reasons for being a faith community, we agree to "meet the challenges of existence within the context of belonging."

Never before have we – as vulnerable individuals and as a community – been so challenged as we are now. To get through this difficult time and to move into the future, may we also affirm that we belong together.

In faith, hope, and love, *John Gibbons*

*With the Membership Committee:*

*Nina Wampler-Doty and Sarah Dorer, co-chairs,  
Marcia Morgan, Rich Suval, Ron Green,  
and Annie Gonzalez-Milliken*

*p.s. Email me (jgibbons@uubedford.org), Annie (parishministeruubedford@gmail.com), or the church office (office@uubedford.org) if you wish to become a member or if you have further questions. Some Sunday this winter or spring, we'll recognize, welcome, and celebrate new members. See you in church!*

## Minister's Musings

Bye-bye 2020! And good riddance: a very common sentiment for so many of us. 2020 was undoubtedly a very intense year. The pandemic. The fires. The uprisings. The election. The murder hornets. You know. And, as many others have noted, 2020 was not the problem. Unfettered capitalism was behind the economic suffering, cruel and incompetent leadership behind the public health disaster, climate change spurring on wildfires, white supremacy and toxic policing sparking the uprisings, a broken democracy and an unhinged fascist president making the election a nightmare. Murder hornets? Yeah, I guess that's just Mother Nature.

Still, while 2020 is just a random collection of days we've assigned a number to, it does feel meaningful to transition to a new year. After all, meaning is what we make. We are the meaning-makers, and it is up to us to take advantage of this turning of the calendar page.

So what parts of 2020 are you ready to let go of? Putting too many expectations on yourself or others? Unhelpful stories about who you are? Trying to control other people or get them to be different? What can you do differently in 2021? Healthier boundaries? More rest? More asking for help, more saying "no"? More reaching out to support others, more saying "yes"?

This year will have many of the same circumstances as the last. We still have a pandemic and horrific wealth inequality, racism, and climate catastrophe. But we also have each other and the ability to make meaning even in dire circumstances. Let's take advantage of this turn of the year and change the only thing we ever really can, our own habits, frameworks and intentions.

*Annie*



## BOARD MATTERS

As we begin a new calendar year, we also approach the midpoint of our church year. We look forward with new hope for vaccines, renewed determination to uphold democratic processes, and a sustained commitment to support our community.

The retirement of our Senior Minister, Reverend John Gibbons, which previously seemed like a theoretical prospect, is beginning to feel very real and immediate. The discussion after our worship service last Sunday revealed emotional bonds and heartfelt appreciation that abides with many parishioners.

It is not possible to avoid the pain and grief that are inevitable when saying farewell to such a beloved person. It is possible to acknowledge our feelings, celebrate Rev. John's accomplishments, and embrace the joy that he has brought to us. Rev. John has been steadfast and dedicated, sharing our good times as well as facing challenges together throughout thirty years of ministry at First Parish. We are deeply grateful for all that he has done. We will miss him.

The Board is seeking people who would like to assist in planning, organizing, and producing a fitting tribute and farewell ceremony to honor Rev. John. If you are willing to help, please contact me <[southard@computer.org](mailto:southard@computer.org)> or speak with any Board member and we will find an appropriate role for your participation.

*David Southard, Parish Board President*

## All Church Climate Book Discussion: Jan. 24 & 26

Whether or not you read Naomi Klein's book "On Fire: The Burning Case for a Green New Deal", come discuss themes in her book at one or both dates, all are welcome:

- Sunday, Jan. 24, 3-4PM (facilitated by Holly Hosmer)
- Tuesday, Jan. 26, 7:30-8:30PM (facilitated by Brown & Lois Pulliam)

**Meeting Zoom Link:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89823280092?pwd=eTQvYVpPT0hhaTl6U1B5dmFFcTMvQT09>  
(Meeting ID: 898 2328 0092, Passcode: 230932)

Klein's work focuses on the intersection of climate change, racism, and inequality, and she was the keynote speaker for the Ware Lecture at the virtual 2020 UUA General Assembly. Check out her lecture at the following link: <https://vimeo.com/showcase/7462757/video/433421388> in which "she spoke both about the reality that in the midst of a global pandemic, we are living a life that, is more connected than ever...in addition to the massive and inspiring uprisings in defense of black lives, all while the clock is striking midnight on the climate crisis." Klein invited us all to do the work to make amends and set things right.

RSVP's encouraged for planning purposes. Please let Holly Hosmer know which discussion(s) you plan to join: 781-275-1630 [hilaryhosmer300@gmail.com](mailto:hilaryhosmer300@gmail.com).

*Corinne Doud*

on behalf of First Parish Environmental Justice Committee

## In Liminal Time - Thoughts from Deborah Weiner, Development Director - Faith Development for Children™

### What Matters

On my desk is a quote that a close friend attached to a napkin, when Ben and I visited for dinner one night, pre-pandemic. The friendship we have with these folks is enduring and they are like family to us. But the quote, written on construction paper in gold letters, is what remains in my head and heart: “When all this is over, what will really matter is how we treated each other.”

I look at that quote several times a day. Here we are, about to inaugurate a new President and Vice President of the United States, standing on the brink of I-don’t-know-what following what pretty much everyone will tell you was the worst year of their lives. Hate crimes have risen over the last four years. So many people are struggling to make ends meet; nearly 1 in 16 people has been infected with COVID-19. I don’t need to go on, because you know the story. How do we treat each other? What is it that really matters?

We’re in the grip of winter. It’s a hard time to not have enough heat, to be homeless, to find yourself or those you know threatened by individuals who toss banana peels, or more, in your driveway, or stick an anonymous note that says “go back to where you came from” on your door. It’s a time for this congregation, and all gathered communities and individuals, to show the ways in which they care about one another. A new day is upon us, and it will not bring a magical fix, although it may bring us hope at a time when we so desperately need it. What else: it starts with us, sometimes in small ways.

If you can find ways to identify clothing, household goods, items that were gifted to you and that you can now gift to others, do that. It helps. If you can make a gift to the World Central Kitchen (as we did for our 4PM Christmas Eve service offering), the Lowell Transitional Housing Center, or other organizations offering food and/or housing at this time of need, know that this helps too. Supporting historically marginalized and under-represented businesses in your area is another way of putting your money where your faith is.

This is not a message intended to guilt you into donating...only to say that, like the phrase on the napkin, how we treat each other makes a huge difference. Many of us hold the belief and hope that, after January 20, our behaviors will start to shift. But the inauguration of Biden and Harris will not be some magic pill: it will take many, many years and much effort to shift entrenched and systemic racism and discrimination in this country. That will be a challenge that will, unfortunately, outlive my time on earth. But...it can begin now, with each of us.

So I encourage you to think about it: “What will really matter is how we treated each other.” *Now* is the time for pondering that statement, those possibilities – with your friends, your children, your extended family – to find the things (both great and small) that we each can do to make this little piece of our world the kind of world we want to live and raise our children in.

Faithfully yours,  
Deb

## RE News

**Thank you** - We offer grateful thanks to Peter Cho, Noelle Denny-Brown, Ginny Crocker, and Joel Parks who have joined our teaching teams for the winter/spring term. We offer our appreciation to Kelly Umstott, Andrew Bramley, Kiya Nicoll, and Erin Campbell who helped our programs in our fall term!



**Mural Day goes digital!** We hope you got a chance to see the murals created by a number of First Parish’s children and youth, which were shared during several worship services. Thanks to Lila Bailey, Nora Bailey, Eloise Carroll, Devin Leida, Moira Gonzalez Milliken, Kei Okamoto, and Sho Okamoto for their creativity!

**Faith Development programs have resumed** as of January 3<sup>rd</sup>. Spirit Play (for PreK, K, and grade 1 children) begins at 9:15AM, CartUUns (grades 2/3/4) and Bibleodeon (grades 5/6/7) each begin at 11:45AM, and the OWL “Taking Flight” program meets on select Sunday evenings at 6PM. Junior Youth Group (grades 6/7/8) continues on Wednesdays at 3:30PM. If you have questions about any of these programs, contact Deb Weiner: [dre@uubedford.org](mailto:dre@uubedford.org).

## A Time of Remembrance, A Blessing for the Future - Jan. 19



A time of change is upon us: time for remembrance and possibility. Parishioners are invited to gather **at 5PM on Jan. 19** on the Common, socially distanced and masked, to mourn those we have lost to the COVID-19 pandemic, and to pray for blessings upon our new administration on the eve of the Presidential inauguration. We will offer candles for us to hold as we reflect, and then our parish bell will toll the number of those who have died in Bedford from COVID-19.

Those who have lost a family member to the disease are invited to be among those ringing the bell. Please contact John Gibbons if you wish to participate in this way. Please note that current state regulations prohibit gatherings of more than 25 people in outside settings; please be respectful of current regulations (which may shift later in January).

## Musical Notes

Goodbye 2020! Good riddance! Here's hoping 2021 will bring us some much-needed calm, sanity, good health and perhaps a chance to be together again "in person".

Here's the music for the upcoming 10AM Sunday services on Zoom –

Jan. 10: We will see a new video of "Four Israeli Dances" danced by Dorothy Anderson-Perales, Ann Budner, and Anne Schwartz, recorded on the Bedford Common in front of First Parish on October 24, 2020. The Adult Choir will also sing "Over the Rainbow" accompanied by Dan Prior on the ukulele, recorded from a service on September 22, 2019.

Jan. 17: Steve Sussman will be playing the piano.

Jan. 24: For the prelude, offertory, and postlude, we will hear the Trio for Flute, Oboe and Piano, composed in 1977 by English composer Madeleine Dring, and beautifully performed at a concert at First Parish on October 5, 2019 by Carol Epple-flute, Mary Cicconetti-Oboe and Leah Kosch-piano.

Jan. 31: We will listen to Denham's "We Laugh, We Cry", arranged by Dean Groves, and performed by a guitar ensemble and quartet of vocalists (recorded "live" on the Common on Saturday, October 24, 2020), enclosed from a service on November 22, 2020.

And a special shout out to Bob Batt for all his help and patience in creating many of the videos we've shown (and will continue to show) during our services and other special events. Thanks, Bob!

Isn't it 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, email me: [bconner@uubedford.org](mailto:bconner@uubedford.org) Let's take advantage of the circumstances we've been given and continue to find ways to explore musical joy.

*Bradford Conner,  
Music Director*

## Peace and Justice

### *Nuclear Ban Treaty Goes into Force*

On Jan. 22, the United Nations treaty (TPNW) making nuclear weapons illegal – *and everything to do with them* – goes into force for the countries that have ratified it, almost 75 years to the day from the first-ever UN resolution, likewise directed toward the "problem of the atom bomb."

Initially approved in 2017 as a result of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons <https://www.icanw.org>, the treaty was ratified by the 50<sup>th</sup> nation last October and becomes effective for each nation ratifying it 90 days after doing so. Of course, the nuclear nations have boycotted the treaty, but it affects all nations in significant ways, whether or not they sign it. Companies involved with nuclear weapons are prohibited from doing *any kind* of business in countries that ratify the treaty. It requires those nations to encourage other nations to join, establishes legal obligations toward those harmed by nuclear weapons *or their production*, and builds an international stigma against them just like other weapons of mass destruction.

There will be celebrations around the world marking "Entry Into Force" Day, January 22<sup>nd</sup>. Check here for more information <http://masspeaceaction.org/call-to-action-celebrate-nuclear-ban-treaty-entry-into-force/>. MUCH work lies ahead, but in the words of its proponents, the TPNW is perhaps "the beginning of the end of nuclear weapons."

—*Jerry Ross* for First Parish Peace & Justice Committee



## Social Responsibility Council Update

The offering from the 8:00 pm Christmas Eve service was directed to our Sanctuary Fund that continues to support Maria and her family as she approaches her three-year anniversary as our guest in sanctuary. Totals for that offering are still being processed and will be reported next month. Our "Share the Plate" offering from October directed \$605.47 to the Bedford Food Bank. November and December amounts are still in process.

As we begin a new year, the SRC again invites all parishioners to think about social outreach projects of education, awareness, service, and social action that you might like to propose for funding.

We are also seeking additional proposals for "Share the Plate" for March through June, whereby we donate half the collection from the first Sunday of the month 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. Please think about submitting your suggestions for a "Share the Plate" offering.

Full information about how to submit an application for a grant or "Share the Plate" proposal and appropriate forms can be found on the SRC page on the church website.

Any comments or questions can be directed to Marge Heckman, SRC chair, at [maheckman@gmail.com](mailto:maheckman@gmail.com).

## WOMEN'S book group

**January meeting** - We didn't want to miss our annual book swap this year, so we are carrying on with a slightly different format. Participants will be given someone's name and address and will leave wrapped book(s) at their home on January 10. The unwrapping and book discussion will take place at 7 p.m. that night on Zoom. If you would like to participate please e-mail Margaret Jackson (mjacksonfpb@yahoo.com) for details, questions, etc.

**February meeting** - The book is "In Regalia" by Erin McCormick. Erin lives in Bedford and will be joining us on February 21 at 7 p.m. (Zoom).

### The remaining 2021 meeting books and dates are:

*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

Please contact Margaret Jackson with any questions: [mjacksonfpb@yahoo.com](mailto:mjacksonfpb@yahoo.com) / 781-275-6580.



We are fortunate at First Parish to have a great community with many caring volunteers who can provide assistance to members who need temporary help with shopping or meals. If you or someone you know at First Parish needs temporary assistance, please let us know. The Coordinator for the month of January is Sandy Boczenowski. Reach her by phone: 781-222-4094 or email Sandy at [sandyboz@gmail.com](mailto:sandyboz@gmail.com). Please make note of the phone number above as it will remain the same every month to reach the current Caring Crew Coordinator.

## Plans for January ... and Beyond

Due to continued spikes in Covid, the meetinghouse remains closed to most activities, including all group meetings. The Leadership Team will re-evaluate regularly, but re-entry is unlikely before spring, if then. Questions about specific activities should be directed to John.



## From the Treasurer

### Give Plus (Electronic Funds Transfer) Giving:

First Parish gladly provides the option of using electronic funds transfer (EFT) via Give Plus to donate or pay your pledge. More of you are using EFT during this time of remote church. Give Plus charges the church for each transaction. You receive credit for the full amount you give using Give Plus. First Parish actually receives your donation minus the transaction fees.

Please consider helping offset the transaction fees. During a credit card transaction, you can check the option to add a 3% donation to cover the fees. The fee for an electronic check is 1% of the check value plus a transaction fee. You could consider adding an amount to the check to help cover the 1%. As always, any financial support you give to First Parish is deeply appreciated. Thank you.



**Wheel of Life of** Donna Cole, a long-time parishioner and a vital member of our choir and music program, died December 4. At First Parish, she and her late husband Chuck were generous contributors of spirit, wisdom, and joy. Our thoughts are with Brian, Laney and their children. A professor at Lesley University, Donna received this tribute: <https://mailchi.mp/lesley/passing-of-former-faculty-member-donna-cole-12-22-20?e=a322b4b4b2>. Donna's ashes will be buried in our Memorial Garden and a virtual memorial will be announced... Also in our hearts are *Mary Levenstein* and *Sarah Dorer* who were with *their father, James Harper*, when he died on 12/31. They made sure he was smartly dressed in his Brooks Brothers pajamas. He was 96, frail, and also had Covid-19... *Judith Frediani's brother David* also succumbed to the coronavirus in Colorado in December... Yet another condolence goes to the *Rabinowitz Family* on the death of *Bill's mother, Sally*. Always upbeat and positive, Sally was often with us at church, was a regular at our monthly CWV discussion groups, and attended shabbos services too... On December 5, Annie Gonzalez Milliken officiated at a bittersweet but truly wonderful memorial service for *Mike Robinson, husband of parishioner Sue Paradis*... And for good news: With proud parents Mary and Fred beaming (or at least we think they were beaming under their masks), *Katie Levenstein* was married to *Tim Cote* on December 13 at a small ceremony at Peirce Farm in Topsfield with John Gibbons officiating.

## News from the Parish Nose



Among those recovered or recovering from Covid are *Bob Doud, Paul Bradford, Cathy and Ron Cordes, Ilona Johnson, and Julian Field...* On the Common at midnight on 12/31, to the accompaniment of our steeple bell and bagpipes, *a dozen people* welcomed 2021 and kicked 2020 to the curb... *Dave Packer* is recuperating from hip surgery at Carleton-Willard... After complications from an infection, *Ron Green* is glad to be home from the hospital... Congratulations to *Brown and Lois Pulliam* who recently celebrated their 65<sup>th</sup>! anniversary. Lois, moreover, was recently named a "Formidable Woman" (who did not know this?) by the League of Women Voters... Faithful Democrat, door-knocker, sign-holder, office holder, public citizen and parishioner *Tom Larkin* was honored to be one of Massachusetts' 11 presidential electors who cast his ballot on 12/14 at the MA State House for Joe Biden... Biden, btw, has nominated *Neera Tanden* to be the next Director of the Office of Management and Budget. Neera grew up at First Parish, graduated from Bedford HS, and was our 2018 Spirit of Democracy speaker. *Neera's mother, Maya*, phoned John Gibbons recently, just to send greetings to all her friends at FPB... *Jean Kates* recently sent us a check for \$10,000, fulfilling the wishes of her beloved wife and devoted parishioner *Dee Russell*... A portion of late parishioner *Paul Vears'* estate also has been received: \$50,000 for the Bedford Citizen Scholarship Foundation ("Dollars for Scholars") and \$10,000 to benefit the children of our partner church in Abásfalva, Transylvania... After watching the Christmas video from Abásfalva (<https://youtu.be/h8U5h67mE4c>), *Kiya Nicol's daughters* exclaimed, "Our church has a SISTER!!?" Absolutely!... Their Christmas video and our 4pm Christmas Eve video ([https://youtu.be/OJ5k\\_puGqI](https://youtu.be/OJ5k_puGqI)) have some similarities, including video of our empty church interiors and videos of kids and families filmed at their homes (thanks Janet Welby!)... *Bill Schulz* has helpfully corrected John Gibbons' mis-pronunciation of what should be JAY-bez Dawes (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3sOJ7C9Y3Eo>)... Congratulations to *Tim Bennett* who received his Eagle Scout award with a project on pollinators funded, in part, by our Social Responsibility Council... *A giant shiny silver monolith* has appeared in front of First Parish facing the Town Common (wait, do monoliths have faces?)... —tpn

## On a Mission to Bring Back Community

By Jenn Puhle

During a recent service, the topic of front porches and conversation with neighbors came to the forefront. I heard the unity expressed in wishing we could invite our neighbors back onto our front porches, to relate in ways our society seems to be moving away from, due partly to the pandemic and partly to emerging feelings of general disconnection.

Your sharing inspired me to continue my mission of connecting people in our town and bringing joy and awareness. I created a talk show a few years back called "Neighbors to Know". It airs on Bedford TV and on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-VQldZF4Nmn59xTqDX3A-w>. Many neighbors are from Bedford and you can learn about them on a deeper level, as you would in the good ole days on your front porch. I also post on social media about happy things, people doing good, sharing moments of Zen to calm our busy lives. <https://www.facebook.com/NeighborstoknowMA>. I do this out of the sheer joy of bringing community back, of sharing neighbors in our town who you may not know, and out of wishing for a world where we all have each other's backs.

Over the past few months, I have had some unexplained health issues and I am grateful for the community at FPB for providing meals, scarves, and love to get me through this mysterious time. My cognition has improved greatly, and I was able to get back on the bandwagon on a podcast to start the new year with joy <https://www.facebook.com/TheJoyrideNY/videos/228080762209284/>. I promise it will connect you to who we all are as humans deep down and to how special keeping that connection between all of us is, to speaking your truth and accepting one another. Thank you, friends, for the gifts you have given me and my family. Sending my appreciation and gratitude and health and joy for you all in this new year!

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### **YOU are invited to a Live Free Webinar hosted by The Environmental Action Team of First Parish Church in Concord (FP/EAT): Zero Carbon Home Tuesday, January 19, 7:00PM**

Learn How to *Cut your Heating Bill, Electric Bill and Carbon Footprint to Zero*. Save on home expenses while contributing to the life of our planet. By David Green, someone who has done it. Q & A following the presentation. All attendees receive a free e-book copy of Mr. Greens book, *Zero Carbon Home*. To Learn More and Register, Go here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/zero-carbon-zero-bills-for-concord-tickets-132483819671>

For more information about the event, contact Gai Kharidia: [gail.kharidia@gmail.com](mailto:gail.kharidia@gmail.com)

For information about the FP/EAT), contact Peter Ludwig: [peterlowitt@devensec.com](mailto:peterlowitt@devensec.com)

## 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/](http://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](mailto:uubedford-it@googlegroups.com).

The church website ([www.uubedford.org](http://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/](http://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](http://www.zoom.us)) platform. If your committee or group would like to meet remotely, contact the church office ([office@uubedford.org](mailto:office@uubedford.org)) and Parish Administrator Joan Petros will be happy to get your meeting set up.

### Sunday Services on YouTube



To find FPB services on YouTube: Go to the church website: [www.uubedford.org](http://www.uubedford.org). Under the pull down menu at the top for “Worship,” select “[Sunday Services on YouTube](#)”. You will be taken to a YouTube page of FP Bedford videos. Click on “Uploads” in the upper left corner for a complete list. To put them in chronological order, click on “SORT BY” (on the right-hand side).

From the Video Team:  
*Bob Bass, Bob Batt,  
 John McClain & Webb Tilney*

Below 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	<b>Sunday Worship &amp; Community Connections</b>	FP Staff	<b>NOTE: New URL as of 10/26/20:</b> <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/936829478?pwd=eFUrbnZYbVZoSDUrWWIRrk5TWUUFUT09">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/936829478?</a> <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/936829478?pwd=eFUrbnZYbVZoSDUrWWIRrk5TWUUFUT09">pwd=eFUrbnZYbVZoSDUrWWIRrk5TWUUFUT09</a> Meeting ID: 936 829 478 Passcode: 485478 by phone: +1 646 876 9923
Sunday, Jan. 10 4:00-5:00PM	<b>The Bedford Lyceum</b>	Ellen Scheiner, coordinator	<a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83429685798?pwd=anAwbEtRTnFGQzM4Tm5zTS8vd2ZxQT09">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83429685798?</a> <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83429685798?pwd=anAwbEtRTnFGQzM4Tm5zTS8vd2ZxQT09">pwd=anAwbEtRTnFGQzM4Tm5zTS8vd2ZxQT09</a> Meeting ID: 834 2968 5798 Passcode: 116304 By phone: +1 646 558 8656
Sunday, Jan 24, 3:00-4:00PM & Tues, Jan 26, 7:30-8:30PM	<b>All Church Climate Book Discussion</b>	FP Environmental Justice Committee	<a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89823280092?pwd=eTQvYVpPT0hhaTl6U1B5dmFFcTMMyQT09">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89823280092?</a> <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89823280092?pwd=eTQvYVpPT0hhaTl6U1B5dmFFcTMMyQT09">pwd=eTQvYVpPT0hhaTl6U1B5dmFFcTMMyQT09</a> Meeting ID: 898 2328 0092 Passcode: 230932 By phone: +1 646 558 8656
<b>Ongoing:</b>			
Thursdays at 9:30AM	<b>Short Stories Discussion Group</b>	Short Stories Group	Open to all – If you'd like to join in the discussion, email ( <a href="mailto:office@uubedford.org">office@uubedford.org</a> ) for the Zoom info
Thursdays, 5:30-6:30PM	<b>Junior &amp; Senior Youth Choirs</b>	Janet Welby	<a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86016021142?pwd=RE9ucUFzTGllde15d2szNnArTkkrUT09">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86016021142?</a> <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86016021142?pwd=RE9ucUFzTGllde15d2szNnArTkkrUT09">pwd=RE9ucUFzTGllde15d2szNnArTkkrUT09</a>
Thursdays at 7:30PM	<b>Story Time for Children</b>	Ministerial Staff	<a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/771525457">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/771525457</a>
Thursdays at 7:30PM	<b>Adult Choir Check-in and Rehearsal</b>	Brad Conner	<a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/197342633?pwd=bVpicUxNVHJkdNINFoxRk1J1UINEdz09">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/197342633?</a> <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/197342633?pwd=bVpicUxNVHJkdNINFoxRk1J1UINEdz09">pwd=bVpicUxNVHJkdNINFoxRk1J1UINEdz09</a>
First Friday of each month at 6:30PM	<b>First Friday Potluck</b>	Ron Green, convener	<a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87697104799?pwd=K2Zad1V0ZndEUCtmRDVmb215VUdUZz09">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87697104799?</a> <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87697104799?pwd=K2Zad1V0ZndEUCtmRDVmb215VUdUZz09">pwd=K2Zad1V0ZndEUCtmRDVmb215VUdUZz09</a>