



The Parishioner

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

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

Volume 54, Issue 8

April 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

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Upcoming Services*

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

Friday, April 2 at 7:00PM

Good Friday/Tenebrae Service

Join us for a contemplative service where we tell the ancient story of Jesus' crucifixion and honor loss and pain in our lives. We will hear beautiful music from Nathan Kimball, Nancy Hair, Cynthia Mork, Robert Noble and Brad Conner. We will close with a Tenebrae dance by Dorothy Anderson-Perales, choreographed alone in quarantine and titled "Confinement."



Sunday, April 4 at 10:00AM

"18 Easters Left: Little Resurrections"

Rev. John Gibbons preaching

If mainline Protestantism continues to decline at its current rate, one observer calculates that it all will be "wiped out" by 2040. I'm not so sure, but meanwhile, I'll suggest reasons for modest celebration. With a dance choreographed by Dorothy Perales, a Time for All Ages, and special music from our youth!

Sunday, April 11 at 10:00AM

"The Limits of Resilience"

Rev. Annie Gonzalez Milliken preaching

Resilience is a much-touted trait these days, and it can be a wonderfully important attribute. But there are limits to resilience too. We'll explore how we can cultivate resilience, respect the limitations, and care for ourselves and others as we move forward, embracing change.

Sunday, April 18 at 10:00AM

"Un-Knowing"

Deborah Weiner, preaching

This time of pandemic has illustrated two powerful pictures for us. One is of the 'big lies' that were told around infection, election, health, racism and community safety; and another is of that which we willfully ignored or failed to know: myths and tales manufactured by Q-Anon, conspiracy theories and those who fail to acknowledge the power of data and science. We'll focus on the paradox of ignorance and willful ignorance and try to discern the importance of these lessons as we look at a post-pandemic society.



Next deadline for submissions is April 25th

Upcoming Services (continued)

Sunday, April 25 at 10:00AM

“In the Fight for Climate Justice, We Must Persist”

An Earth Day Service coordinated by the First Parish Environmental Justice Committee

Our guest speaker, Reverend Vernon Walker, will reflect on climate change, the greatest existential threat to human existence and other ecosystems on planet earth. In 2018 a report was released from the UN IPCC that warned that human beings have 12 years for global warming to be kept to a maximum of 1.5C, a degree above which will make the risk of droughts, floods, and extreme heat more severe, and can cause climate related poverty for millions of people. In the fight to keep greenhouse gases to 1.5C by 2030, we must be persistent and believe in the power of people uniting together to accomplish this goal and win this fight for climate justice! There will be opportunity for Questions & Answers with Rev. Walker immediately following the service on the same zoom link.

Common Thoughts

Please forgive me, but I'm being nostalgic. In no particular order, these are among those who have spoken from our pulpit or otherwise interacted with First Parish while I've been privileged to be here: author and illustrator Tomie dePaola, Paul and Niki Tsongas, Phil Berrigan, Robert Meeropol (son of the executed Rosenberg's), Elizabeth Warren, Ted Kennedy, legal scholars Charles Ogletree and Randall Kennedy, SJC Chief Ralph Gants, Bree Newsome (who tore down the Confederate flag in Columbia, SC), Kitty and Mike Dukakis, Rev. Al Sharpton, Jibreel Khazan (one of the 1960 Greensboro lunch-counter sit-in demonstrators), poets Billy Collins and X.J. Kennedy, authors Annie Lamott (2x) and Sebastian Junger, former Planned Parenthood CEO Nicki Gamble, military historian Andrew Bacevich (2x), food and democracy activist Frances Moore Lappé, Boston bombing “man in the cowboy hat” Carlos Arredondo, singer Lucy Blue Tremblay, New Bostonians Director (and UU minister) Cheng Imm Tan, evolutionary biologists Richard Wrangham and Ernst Mayr, Interfaith Alliance president Welton Gaddy, political activist Neera Tanden, Joyce and Mel King, humanists Ed Doerr and Michael Newdow (who sang to us a history of the Constitution, everything beginning with the letter “C”) - as well as our own Ellery Schempp of Abington v. Schempp fame, Barry Lynn (Americans United for the Separation of Church and State), METCO pioneer Jean Maguire, Rabbi Michael Lerner (Tikkun), the first Jewish female cantor Barbara Ostfeld, John Rosenthal (End Handgun Violence), Simmons College president Susan Scrimshaw, Laurie Cabot, high priestess and witch of Salem, Rev. Billy & the Church of Stop Shopping Choir (4x), Red Sox pitcher “Spaceman” Bill Lee, MA UCC president Jim Antal, comedian Jimmy Tingle, environmentalist Bill McKibben, and – just last week – Boston City Councilor Lydia Edwards. I've omitted many more familiar names, such as local officials and specifically UU notables. Who else do you recall? Give yourselves a hand.

Again, it's been a privilege.



Minister's Musings

My household is in an incredibly privileged position where all four adult members will be fully vaccinated in a few weeks. The hospital chaplain was first, followed by the two other ordained clergy, courtesy of a morally ambiguous offer by Steward Health to vaccinate anyone who is ordained regardless of other factors. Then lastly, the religious educator, qualifying as a teacher. The 5 year-old, of course, will not be vaccinated anytime soon, so we have some limitations.

Still, it feels like a miraculous shift. Just the other day I went into my best friend's house to hang out for the first time. She moved during the pandemic and while we did some occasional quarantine-and-test-before-trips together to Air BnBs I had not spent time in her home. It felt strange, forbidden and totally normal all at the same time.

We know that many people are not yet vaccinated, that the rollout has been wildly inequitable, that COVID numbers are still dangerously high in MA. The pandemic is not over, but things are changing. So you will be noticing some shifts in church life. We'll be starting outdoor children and youth programming very soon, and maybe your small group ministry will begin meeting in a yard again. If all of you are vaccinated, maybe even in a home!

We also have put together a re-opening task force, with folks from various parts of our church's programs and ministries, to help us figure out how to be together as much as we can while staying as safe and inclusive as possible. It's a balancing act and we will adjust as needed and work to meet as many needs as we can, together.

There are still so many limitations, still so much loss that we are grieving. But also, there is more light, more warmth, more vaccines, more hope. Let us lean into it with care and love.





BOARD MATTERS

As we enter the last two months of our church season, the Board is assessing progress toward our “Big Three” milestones of hiring three staff positions that are central to our congregation’s life: the Director of Faith Development for Children, the Parish Administrator, and the Interim Minister who will lead us toward the selection of a called, settled minister.

The Board has responded to these challenges by calling on lay leaders to help us chart the future direction of our congregation. We have established a model of volunteer leadership that encourages closed-ended, highly focused lay-led teams, or task forces, to do “the next right thing.” This leadership concept provides an exciting and agile way to respond to our needs, and to organize our energies in a way that encourages each of us to play to our strengths.

I am proud to report that, with the help and support of our lay-led teams, all three goals are nearing completion. Thanks to the **DFDC Search Team**, we are thrilled to welcome Lisa Maria Andreoli Steinberg as our new Director of Faith Development for Children. The **Parish Administrator Search Team** has recommended finalists, and we expect to announce this position shortly. And, thanks to the **Interim Minister Search Team** with input from the congregation, this month we are submitting our information package to the Unitarian Universalist Association matching process.

There is still much to do in this season.

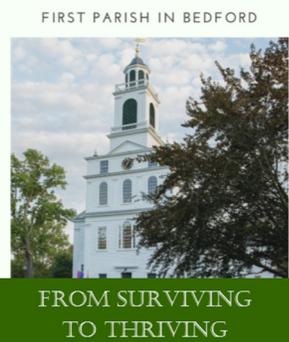
- We will soon have recommendations from our **Administrative Software Selection Team** for a comprehensive church management software package, which will unify many new features for leadership, membership, finances, and communications. Our new Parish Administrator will be instrumental in setting up and transitioning to the new administrative systems.
- Currently, there are several **Retirement Appreciation Teams**, who are organizing events that recognize and celebrate the extraordinary and impactful careers of our beloved retiring staff members.
- We are launching a **Reopening Team** to coordinate many aspects involved in planning when we can once again be together in person, in the post-pandemic *new normal*.

On behalf of the Board, I thank all those who participate in every corner of our community, who make it a pleasure and a privilege to serve this congregation.

David Southard, President, Parish Board

Stewardship: *Time to Pledge!*

As we did last year during Covid shut-down, we are conducting the Annual Spring Stewardship Drive mainly electronically. For everyone whose email we know, we have sent your pledge “packet” of information to your email. It includes a letter from the Committee and the ministers, along with a note to help inform your pledge decision and ways to submit your pledge. Some will receive a packet in the mail. Please read the information, consider your pledge, and let us know your decision: the sooner the better, but preferably *by May 2*.



AFTER you’ve reviewed the materials, THEN go to the Stewardship page on our website and fill out your pledge on-line: <https://www.uubedford.org/community-life/stewardship/>.

If somehow you did not receive materials, please alert Joan Petros, Parish Administrator, and that will be remedied: office@uubedford.org.

Doing things this way gives our Board an informed expectation about giving. Once we know what parishioners expect to give, we can adjust our budget accordingly.

We know you’ll do what you can, and we know you’ll be as generous as you can be. Obviously, your generosity matters greatly, especially now.

The Stewardship Committee wants you to be aware that you can pay your pledge in the form of stock. You will save on your tax bill. Giving from your brokerage account allows you to avoid capital gains tax if your stock has gone up in value. You must have held the stock for 18 months or longer and it is transferred directly to First Parish. And if you transfer stock from your IRA and you are 72 or older, the value of the stock is not included as ordinary income. No tax is due.

First Parish administration is familiar with this process. Please let them know of your plan. Please consult with your broker or financial adviser for added details. And, consider using your tax savings as an addition to your pledge. All forms of pledges are gratefully received.

With profound gratitude for your generosity and commitment to First Parish from your Stewardship Team.

Appreciatively!

John Gibbons, Annie Gonzalez Milliken, Joanne Glover, Webb Tilney, Kath McCafferty, Ron Green, Jihane Lefebvre

The Bedford Lyceum

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

Sunday, April 25, 4:00-5:00PM: “*Cyber Security in 2021: What to look out for and how to protect yourself*” presented by Daniel Hastings.

Scams, data breaches and hacks. All words that may sound scary especially when reading in the news that your personal data may have been compromised. This talk will cover the types of actors involved in some of the most recent data breaches, the impact of these hacks and how to take action if you have been impacted. Most importantly, this talk will cover important tools and rules to follow to help prevent yourself from being scammed or vulnerable to further scams if your data has been compromised in a data breach.

Daniel Hastings has been a senior security consultant at the security firm NCC Group for the past five years. He specializes in mobile and web application security with a focus on mobile privacy and has spoken at several international security conferences about his research on the discrepancy between mobile application privacy policies and actual data collection practices. He has also created a tool to help people interested in performing their own privacy investigations.

Sunday, May 2, 4:00pm-5:00PM: “*My Refugee Journey*” presented by Bopha Malone. Bedford Select Board Member and community activist Bopha Malone will share her experience as a refugee to the U.S. She escaped from war-torn, landmine-infested Cambodia by foot with her mother, reunited with her father and brother in a Thailand refugee camp, and arrived in the United States with nothing but the clothes on her back to achieve her family’s American Dream.

Bopha Malone is a VP and Regional Business Advisor at Enterprise Bank. She and her husband Tom and their two children, Taevy and Caelan, moved to Bedford in 2016. In 2020 she became the first Cambodian-American woman elected to public office in Massachusetts as a member of the Bedford’s Select Board. She is also the first person of color to serve on Bedford’s Select Board. Bopha immigrated to the U.S. at the age of nine, and credits caring mentors for helping her get to where she is today. As a first-generation Cambodian-American who benefited from the support and encouragement of others, her passion is to seek opportunities to give back to others facing similar challenges.

Zoom Link for both presentations:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83429685798?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83429685798?pwd=anAwBtRTnFGQzM4Tm5zTS8vd2ZxQT09)

[pwd=anAwBtRTnFGQzM4Tm5zTS8vd2ZxQT09](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

**All First Parish in Bedford Lyceums are FREE and open to the public. No registration is required. Feel free to share this link with family or friends who might also be interested. **

Questions? Please contact Ellen Scheiner at mountainbreeze52@gmail.com

Greetings from the First Parish Covid Re-opening Task Force!

A task force has been formed to craft proposals for the Covid-safe re-opening of First Parish. We all want to be together again, but we know it’s not going to be as simple as just picking a day and showing up, right? We need to make sure we do it in the safest and most inclusive way possible, because that’s what UUUs do. We hope to come up with a timeline and operational guidelines taking into consideration guidance from health officials and the UUA. We look forward to everyone’s input and there will be all-congregation meetings to keep everyone informed. Members of the task force are Rev. Annie, Brad Conner, Bea Brunkhorst, Sarah Dorer, Bob Doud, Susan Lincoln, Kath McCafferty, and Joel Parks, chosen to represent various parts of our congregation and relevant committees. We are just getting started, but we want everyone to feel free to contact any member of the task force with their concerns and questions.



Believe it or not, it’s time to consider if you’d like to participate in our annual UUA denominational conference, the venerable General Assembly (GA), June 23-27. It’s again virtual this year and not quite the same as when I’d be hosting an all-expenses-paid all-you-can-eat-and-drink swing-from-the-chandeliers Bedford Dinner. But, well, we’ll do our best. Feel free to register and, if you’d like to be considered one of Bedford’s 8 official delegates, please let me know. —*John*

For the **full schedule and information**, go to: <https://www.uua.org/ga>.

In Liminal Time - Thoughts from Deborah Weiner, Developmental Director - Faith Development for Children **“A Commitment to Future Health, and Leaving Well”**

In last month's *Parishioner*, I continued my focus on the tasks of transitional ministry, particularly Leadership and Linkage. (And in February, I wrote about Mission and Vision with regard to transitional work). This month I want to offer reflections on the ongoing and future health of the congregation, as I prepare to leave you at the end of June.

When I arrived at First Parish I set about the initial work of the interim leader: analyzing the system to understand what had happened and what was continuing here in a time of transition and challenge. I interviewed many of you in groups or individually. What you offered helped to develop a picture of both the current challenges and those that would be present in the coming years. I then set about ‘joining the system’ - really engaging in what you do, who you are, what you hold as important, your congregation’s traditions and behaviors. It was, and is, rewarding work.

I also connected with the staff and lay leaders of this congregation to help me understand more about the values and structures of the church that sustain the work - as well as those systems that might have cracks in them. While we put lots of focus into strengthening the structures of faith development, we also looked at what might be shifted or further developed to provide a stronger and more vital future for the congregation. That work is even more important now than we imagined three years ago: a pandemic and the impending departure of your senior minister and church administrator have amped up the need for vibrant leadership as you move forward.

What does “*building vitality*” mean as it pertains to churches? Among other things, the interim religious education leader helps the congregation in:

- Supporting the congregation in renewing its vision, strengthening its stewardship, preparing for new professional leadership, and engaging its future with anticipation and zest.
- Helping the congregation focus energy on the future in a positive way.
- Planning for closure and having an effective leave-taking strategy.
- Serving as a resource to the congregation’s religious educator search process.
- Implementing change while also leaving the system open to future changes.
- Developing and implementing a transition strategy for transferring information to the next religious educator.

This is where the vision for the future of faith development and the importance of laying down a path for ongoing leadership and continuity meet. So, how’s that going? I am thrilled that the congregation has hired Lisa Maria

Andreoli Steinberg, an experienced religious educator, to join the team as your new Director of Faith Development for Children on August 1. Together with Annie, Lisa Maria will work on implementing the programs that we are outlining for next year and will work on helping the congregation re-engage in faith development post-pandemic. First Parish was able to maintain a strong faith development program during the pandemic and fared better than many congregations in engaging children and youth during an extraordinarily difficult time. I am confident that, moving forward, the vitality of faith development will continue in this congregation.

My focus for the next few months is on making sure that the faith development program is as strong as it can be. Toward that end we will be seeking out team leaders and teachers for the next church year, with the goal of fully staffing this program before the end of ‘regular’ worship services in mid-June. This means that your new settled religious leader can enter the church ‘system’ with a robust program that is ready to go in August - the best possible way to welcome a new leader and support their ongoing ministry.

There is record-keeping and information-gathering to do as well. When I depart First Parish on June 30th, I’ll leave my successor a personal letter with information about how I’ve experienced this transitional ministry and offering as much detail as I can about the ABC’s of faith development ministry here. The files will be up-to-date and complete, the curriculum and RE supplies as well-organized as possible (even within the midst of upheaval due to being out of the building for more than a year). Ensuring a smooth and supportive transition is key to building ongoing vitality and I am committed to making sure that exists.

And then there’s the ‘closure’ part. Transitional leadership is not all smooth, and I know my arrival at First Parish was challenged by the shape that the program was in when I arrived, and by the changes - some of them abrupt - that you experienced around this transition. I hope you can see that, though the path was bumpy, the ensuing time has allowed for the development of a healthy faith development program for all ages.

As for the leave-taking part of our work together, I hope that you will want to identify a time for both formal and informal goodbyes, knowing that in saying goodbye *well*, we engage not only in an important act of transition and closure, but take another step toward making sure that we all embrace health and vitality in this historic and important UU congregation. May it be so.

Faith Development News

EGG (CAN) HUNT Join the Easter Egg Hunt! April 4 at 12 noon, on the Common!



For Kids

Spring has arrived and we're so ready for some face-to-face connection! Bring the kids to First Parish's Egg Hunt on Easter Sunday at noon.

We'll gather in front of the main door to the church (facing the Common, big red heart on the door) and accept donations of food to bring to our local food pantry. Then we'll set the kiddos loose for a hunt for treasure! Bring a basket or bag for each kiddo, make sure everyone has a mask. We can't wait to see you there.

Outdoor Faith Development Returns to First Parish!

As more people get vaccinated and we keep working at lowering infection rates (keep masking! Distancing! Washing hands!), we are eyeing a return to outdoor, socially-distanced in-person faith development programming at First Parish! Our target date is April 11th for these programs – watch Parish Biz for updates.

Social Responsibility Council Update

We do not yet have complete numbers for the Feb and March "Share the Plate" collections for the Chelsea Food Bank and the Boston Ujima Fund, respectively. Checks were still being received, so those numbers will be reported next month.

We have received proposals for the April and May "Share the Plate" Sundays which were approved by the SRC in March:

- **April 11- UU Mass Action with Laura Wagner speaking.** UU Mass Action's mission is to organize and mobilize UUs in MA to confront oppression. They provide pathways towards justice and identify opportunities for us to all live our shared values.
- **May 2- Springfield Climate Justice Coalition with Verne McArthur speaking.** SCJC is "committed to working for climate justice, meaning keeping the interests and participation of communities most impacted and least responsible for climate change and environmental degradation at the forefront of our work." Right now, they are working to cover the costs of publicizing the dangers of biomass and the actions that people can take to oppose this.

The June "Share the Plate" Sunday is still open. We also have funds remaining for potential grant proposals. Forms can be found on the SRC page of the church website. Questions can be directed to Marge Heckman, SRC chair, at maheckman@gmail.com. Any new proposals will be considered at our April 21st meeting.

Peace & Justice News - Join Mass Peace Action!

Mass Peace Action (MAPA) is the premier Massachusetts advocacy organization tracking developments in the peace and social justice arena. Militarism and military spending underlie so many of the social inequities we struggle to overcome and limit the resources to address them. Stay in tune with the latest information through regular mailings and calls to action, like this one highlighting Sen. Ed Markey's bill to redirect \$1 billion from the exorbitant and dangerous "replacement ICBM program" and to instead fund Covid 19 vaccine development. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/mar/26/democrats-missile-funds-vaccine-development>

Register for MAPA's annual meeting on April 24 with keynote speaker Rep. Jim McGovern and consider joining. Go to: www.masspeaceaction.org, click on Events and scroll until you come to this event.

And please consider registering for UU Advocacy Day (see below). This annual event gives us face time with some of our legislators to indicate our support for new bills that would further UU ideals that we share. The event begins with a late morning Zoom session that describes the bills our denomination deems worthy of our support, followed by a Zoom session with your state Rep (or staff member), then another session with your Senator. You don't need to say anything, your presence helps our message, and perhaps your knowledge.

2021 UU Advocacy Day

Tuesday, April 13, 11:00 - 4:00 PM

Register at www.uumassaction.org by April 6

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1045370669202838/>

Community gathering at 11:00-12:00, meetings with legislators in the afternoon. Representatives @1:00, Senators @ 2:30 PM some meetings times may vary

Join your fellow UUs for our annual UU Advocacy Day! Crucial changes are needed in Massachusetts. Let's put our faith into action as we fight for Immigrant Justice, Climate & Environmental Justice, Economic Justice, Indigenous Justice and Decarceration & Ending Solitary Confinement. We'll have a community gathering to kick us off, and then participants will have virtual meetings with their Reps and Senators.

List of priority bills and informational videos here: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1X8DjcUIRPdUiygKvQ3-F_TexFyvL0IJVcWq_BS58aKk/edit

Join one of two optional training opportunities to help you prepare for UU Advocacy Day: **Wed, April 7 6:00-7:30pm** or **Thursday, April 8th 1:00pm - 2:30pm**



"I know that there is a meaning to it all, a little resurrection every time I fall."

—from *Vice Verses* (2011) by Jon Foreman (b. 1976), title song from the album by the American rock band, *Switchfoot*

Here's the music for upcoming worship services on Zoom:

April 2, Tenebrae/Good Friday (special time at 7:00PM): As I always say, this is one of my favorite services of the year. There will be an hour-long story-type service encompassing many of the customary Tenebrae/Good Friday themes. As usual, there will be music to enhance the mysterious ambience of the service including pieces for cello by J.S. Bach played by Nathan Kimball and Nancy Hair, Cynthia Mork singing Bach's "O Sacred Head Now Wounded", Robert Noble and me playing an organ/piano arrangement of a tune from the "Sacred Harp" and the adult choir singing the "Lacrimosa" from Mozart's *Requiem* from Music Sunday 2016. To end the service, Dorothy Anderson-Perales has created a piece entitled "Confinement" danced to the famous mournful Albinoni *Adagio* in g minor. Combining tradition with a touch of unconventionality, this will be a service of shadows and deep reflection.

April 4, Easter: To celebrate the day, Robert Noble and I will play an arrangement of the hymn "For the Beauty of the Earth", and Robert will also play a jubilant *Voluntary* by Denis Bédard as a postlude. We will sing along (on mute) the hymn "Lo! The Earth Awakes Again", the adult choir will sing Parry's uplifting "I Was Glad" from Easter Sunday 2017, and the youth choir will sing "Jambo – Swahili Welcome Song" recorded on March 21, 2021. To begin the service, Dorothy Anderson-Perales has created a piece entitled "Joy" danced to the famous and effervescent "Spring" from Vivaldi's evergreen "The Seasons".

April 11: Steve Sussman will be playing piano. Carol Eppelflute, Elizabeth Connors-clarinet and I will perform "April: *Snowdrop*" from Tchaikovsky's "The Seasons" from a service in March 2019 as the prelude.

April 18: Amongst other music, we will listen to emotional performances of "Been to Canaan" by Carole King and Kemp Harris' "Good Night America".

April 25: The Environmental Justice Committee has put together a terrific service including Steve Sussman playing "What a Wonderful World" and "Blue Boat Home" on piano, Niti Seereeram singing "Colors of the Wind" by Menken & Schwartz and an encore showing of "Spirit of Life", arranged by Dean Groves, sung by Cynthia Mork with soprano saxophone accompaniment by Ian Carroll, danced by Dorothy Anderson-Perales, Ann Budner, and Anne Schwartz, recorded on the Bedford Common on October 24, 2020.

And don't forget, Music Sunday is coming on May 2nd.

—Bradford Conner, Music Director

A Note from Robert Noble...

Life circumstances inevitably change from time to time, and my latest transition is about to take place. Carol and I will be moving to Gloucester in June as empty nesters with my retirement imminent.

Unfortunately that means I will no longer be able to serve as organist for First Parish.

Working with you and the choir, and leading the congregation in song, has been a most fulfilling experience for me and I will be so sorry to let it go. In my career as a somewhat peripatetic musician I have encountered numerous churches in the Boston area and I can say without question that First Parish is the most energetic and vibrant faith community I have come across. You have all embraced me with warmth, as you do everyone who walks through the doors of the church, and made me feel welcomed, appreciated and part of the community. That has meant a great deal to me and I hope I will be able to visit and perhaps still participate in a lesser way in the musical life of the church.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute. I wish you, the choir, the ministers and the congregation all blessings in the future.

Interim Minister Search Team (IMST) Update

The IMST continues to meet weekly. We appreciate all of your comments, questions and feedback. We are planning to schedule a Zoom meeting on Friday, April 9 at 7 p.m. for interested children, youth and their families to meet with the IMST and Deb Weiner. Please look out for the details on ParishBiz or the RE email list.

To remind everyone about the timeline for hiring an Interim Minister:

- We will receive a list of candidates from the UUA on May 8th.
- We will interview candidates and make a recommendation to the Board within 2 weeks. If we don't match with a candidate on the first round, we will continue to work with the UUA and recruit until we do. When we find the right candidate, the Board will make an offer.
- After finalized, we'll announce the name of the Interim Minister who will start in August 2021.

We'll keep you posted. Please contact us anytime.

Tina Nappi (tinanappi@msn.com)

Abby Hafer (abby.hafer@gmail.com)

Brown Pulliam (brownpulliam@gmail.com)

Chris Gittins (cmgitt@aol.com)

Join UU MA Action Hour on Earth Day, April 22, noon to 1 pm

Once a month, Mass. UUs join on-line to contact legislators and other government officials about issues from climate change to indigenous rights and criminal justice reform. It's a jam-packed hour using materials prepared by UU coordinator Tali Smookler. The Action Hour plus UU Advocacy Day on April 13, have been very effective. For more information contact Holly Hosmer (hilaryhosmer300@gmail.com) or Tali Smookler, (tsmookler@uumassaction.org) Unitarian Universalist Mass Action Network, Cell: 857-285-2377

Website: www.uumassaction.org
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/UU-Mass-Action>



On April 18 at 7PM on Zoom we'll discuss *The Tattooist of Auschwitz*.

From Wikipedia: *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* is a 2018 Holocaust novel by New Zealand novelist Heather Morris. The book tells the story of how Slovakian Jew Lale Sokolov, who was imprisoned at Auschwitz in 1942, fell in love with a girl he was tattooing at the concentration camp. The story is based on the real lives of Sokolov and his wife, Gita Furman.

The remaining book group books/dates for this church year are:

The Book of Longings (Sue Monk Kidd) - May 16
The Giver of Stars (Jojo Moyes) and choosing books for the following church year - June 6

For any questions, please contact Margaret Jackson (mjacksonfpb@yahoo.com or 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 a few meals delivered. If you or someone you know at First Parish needs temporary assistance, please let us know.

The Coordinator for the month of April is Sandy Boczenowski. Reach her by phone: 781-222-4094 (or cell 617-943-0691), or email her at sandyboz@gmail.com.

We are looking for a few more folks to act as monthly coordinators. Please contact Rev. Annie (parishministeruubedford@gmail.com) or Sandy to volunteer. It is very rewarding to see how quickly people reach out to each other when we set up a request using Sign Up Genius or Lotsa Helping Hands, or simply send a request to the Anno List.



The life of *Robert "Sully" Sullivan* was honored on March 11 with military honors in recognition of his years as a navigator on KC-135 aircraft refueling tankers, with John Gibbons officiating. Sully and his wife Mary-Ann were longtime Bedford residents ("We Support Our Troops" is the sign in front of their Springs Road home), and active volunteers with the Bedford Community Table and other good causes.

The passionate, engaged, loving, and always-in-motion life of *Tom Kane* was celebrated March 24 in Plymouth and then at the National Cemetery in Bourne, recognizing Tom's years as navigator of B-47 stratojets. John also officiated. Our thoughts are with Merc and all the Kane Family. Tom and Merc joined First Parish in 1970. See you above the clouds! See you down the road! See you on the green!

Former parishioner *Carla Thomas Priest* died March 25 after 30 years of kidney disease. Carla once was director of Bedford's Health Department. Since 1990, she and husband Bill have lived in Harwich. A long-time advocate of health and wellness, she authored "Rejoice Regardless" in 2012.

Our thoughts are with *Susan Lincoln* after her brother's death due, in part, to Covid. And also with *Laurie Groves* whose sister Julie died from Covid.

Parish Photo Directory

Those of you who have been part of First Parish for years know that every five years or so we update our parish "Photo Directory." While it is time to do that once again, in this electronic age and because of in-person restrictions, we have moved to an electronic directory instead.

Thank you to those of you who have logged on to the *InstantChurchDirectory* site and provided a photo of you and/or your family. However, there are many of you who have not yet done this. As we move into the next couple of years with new staff members, we think it is critical for new staff to be able to identify you by face as well as by name.

You can access the directory through the church website: www.uubedford.org. On the right-hand side of the homepage you will see an icon that says "Online church directory."



If you need coaching, Nina Wampler is the go-to person who can help you through the process, and Nancy Daugherty is still willing to take your picture. Emails: nina.wampler@gmail.com and nancydaugh@aol.com.

Sarah Dorer, for the Membership Committee

Sanctuary News - The Latest About Maria

On March 1st, this news was distributed:

Friends and Compañeros....

Glorious news! This morning Maria received official confirmation that she has a one-year stay of deportation. Accompanied by her attorney Susan Roses, Neesha Suarez from Congressman Moulton's office, her son Saul, and me, we visited ICE offices in Burlington. Thanks to the advance work done by everyone, including all the members of our Sanctuary Coalition, today's meeting was brief and perfunctory. Maria is relieved, overjoyed, and thankful to God and to all who have helped and accompanied her for the last three years.

This status will allow Maria to get a work permit, pursue further legal options, come and go as she wishes, and ultimately to find new living quarters with her family. For many reasons, she will not be leaving the church imminently. Meanwhile, the church building remains closed to visitors.

Our Coalition will continue to be needed as Maria transitions to the next phases of her journey to freedom.

*"We'll build a land where we bind up the broken,
We'll build a land where the captives go free...."*

With everlasting appreciation for the work we continue to do together,

—John Gibbons

On Sunday, March 28, there was a heartfelt/tearful/virtual hugging Zoom celebration with representatives of the ten covenanted congregations and all others who have supported Maria. My Welcoming Comments and Maria's at this event are printed on the next page. And the newest news: Maria plans to join other women formerly in sanctuary at an April protest at the White House in Washington, DC, demanding freedom and justice for all who remain detained! —john

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. **Last quarter, the church received \$130** – a very easy fundraiser with no effort on our part!

From the First Parish home page (www.u Bedford.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 directly to www.smile.amazon.com and choose "First Parish of Bedford" as the supported charity.



News from the Parish Nose

Wow! *Norm Heckman* is home and thriving after a serious cardiac event. A few stents later, Marge is hugely relieved and he's raring to go... After a stay at Lahey, *Dave Packer* is home with hospice care, alert and at ease, enjoying visits with family and friends, and rather baffled by his life/death in-between status. He welcomes cards and emails, and - sometimes - visitors. Call Ginny ahead at 781-275-4056... *Ron Green* will have gall bladder surgery on April 8... Long-time friend and new member *Sheila Albrecht* will soon move to Plymouth to care for her ailing mother, alas... *Cathy and Ron Cordes* have bade fond and heartfelt farewells as they move to Philadelphia... *Holden & Hosmer's* are contemplating a move to Maine... *Jenn Puhle* is coping after a covid diagnosis... What great Lyceums we've had lately: *Joyce Peseroff's* poetry in February and *Ben Sears'* retrospective on the life of Mary Baker Eddy in March... Did you know that *Tiziana Dearing*, WBUR host of Radio Boston was a frequent attendee at FPB when she lived in Bedford?... Be sure to see the *Covid-19 remembrance*, painted rocks and balanced-rock flaming chalice which parishioners and Mark Bailey created, now in our Memorial Garden... Covid-19 *Testing Tuesdays* continue, now scheduled for April 13 and 27. Pre-register at <https://bedfordresearch.simplybook.me/v2/> ... Plans proceed for a *new drinking fountain* and semi-circular rock wall near our Memorial Garden... *Laurie Groves* is facing foot surgery in mid-April, and will be unable to put weight on it until sometime in July... *Jeff Haynes*, exceptional son of *Cindy and Bill*, married The Wonderful *Emma Rich* in a park in Virginia in early March!... On March 21 we welcomed (and distributed swag) to new members: *Sheila Albrecht, Sue Baldauf, Rosie Brennan, Robin Grace, Dorothy Johnson, Sarah Klockowski, Jihane Lefebvre, Bill Manning, Suzanne Paradis, Paul Pellegrini, Ali Sadeghpour, Ed Schwartz, Niti Seereeram, Sanjeev Seereeram, Joyce Simard, and Ladi Volicer*. Inspired, long-time attendee *Chris Tohline* joined the fray as a new member, too. Welcome All! —tpn



John's Welcoming Comments at Maria's Farewell

Good afternoon, everybody! Some but not all of you know that the room where Maria has lived for 1,178 days (and counting) used to be known as Room 201, a practical but boring designation. No more! A plaque will be placed on its wall and from now on forevermore it will be known as:

Habitación Maria Elena Macario

*Con fé en Dios y la bondad de los seres humanos,
ella ganó una victoria por la libertad, la justicia para
los inmigrantes,
y consiguió la reunificación de su familia
viviendo valientemente aquí en este Santuario.
2018 - 2021*

The Maria Elena Macario Room

*With faith in God and the goodness of human beings
she won a victory for freedom, immigrant justice,
and the reunification of her family
by courageously living here in Sanctuary.
2018 – 2021*

In another month, we hope, Maria will live freely in a new apartment with three of her sons. We gather this afternoon to honor Maria and this bittersweet occasion. It is bitter because Maria's family has been broken and is *not* reunified. Maria remains in jeopardy. It is bitter because so many men, women, and children live in fear and desperation in this country, at its border, and in their native lands all around the world. So many have died. This is bitterly unconscionable.

And today is also sweet. It is sweet to know what amazing things can happen when diverse people of goodwill act together, united in common covenant. *El pueblo unido jamás será vencido*: the people united will never be defeated. We should try it more often! It is sweet that Maria has won *this* victory. It is sweet that Maria has found her powerful voice and that, in April, with others who have lived in sanctuary, she has plans to go to the White House in Washington to demand freedom and justice for all.

In this bittersweet season of Passover and Holy Week, we pray for the release of all captives, Hallelu jah, Amein, Amen, and welcome.

Maria's Farewell Comments

(As spoken - in English - to representatives of the 10 covenanted congregations in our Sanctuary Coalition on March 28 as she prepares to freely move to a new apartment in Lynn sometime in the next month.)

I have so many words of thanks, of gratitude to God for having put me in this place where I fell among marvelous angels that God put in my path and in my life. And also in the life of my family.

I want to tell all of you today, with all my heart, this day the 28th of March, that words are not sufficient to tell you how much I care for you, how much I love you. Saying that is what I can do, because I have no way to repay you. Even if I did, I would not be able to pay back all you have done for me during these three years and three months.

I am so content with the victory I've achieved, that God gave me. And very happy also because I will return to my children. I hope too that God will help me reunite with my husband.

I thank all of you for your support and for the help you gave me, for those words so sweet that you spoke to me, your smiles, those affectionate hugs that you gave me. When I most needed it you were with me.

Thank you so much. May God bless you all, and may God bless your families. I want to tell you that I have missed you a great deal during this pandemic when I could not see you. I ask God to keep you wherever you are. You are always in my prayers and in my heart.

I'd like to mention all your names, but there are many. To all the volunteers, to those who went food shopping, to Tom who had such patience with my list, to my teachers, too, the great support they gave me to speak English. To those of the Committee here in the Church, the Pastor, Tony, my visitors, those who helped with my children, those here and those in Guatemala.

I will carry all this with me to my death, what you have done with me. I will take a great memory of this church and its huge heart, where the doors were open waiting for me when I arrived. You are my family too.

Thank you again, and receive greetings from all my family. My husband and my children, my mother and my brothers, are also very grateful for what you have done.

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.

Sunday Services on YouTube



To find FPB services on YouTube: Go to the church website: 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).

The link is also sent out each week by one of us on the Anno email list.

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	Sunday Worship & Community Connections	FP Staff	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/936829478?pwd=eFUrbnZYbVZoSDUrWWIRrk5TWUIFUT09 Meeting ID: 936 829 478 Passcode: 485478 by phone: +1 646 876 9923
Friday, April 2 at 6:30PM	First Friday Potluck	Ron Green, convener	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87697104799?pwd=K2Zad1V0ZndEUCtmRDVmb2l5VUdUZz09
Sundays, Apr 25 & May 2 4:00-5:00PM	The Bedford Lyceum	Ellen Scheiner, coordinator	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83429685798?pwd=anAwBtRTnFGQzM4Tm5zTS8vd2ZxQT09 Meeting ID: 834 2968 5798 Passcode: 116304 By phone: +1 646 558 8656
Sunday, Apr 18, 7:00PM	Women's Book Group		Contact Margaret Jackson (mjacksonfpb@yahoo.com) for Zoom info if you'd like to join.
ONGOING:			
Thursdays at 9:30AM	Short Stories Discussion Group	Short Stories Group	Open to all – If you'd like to join in the discussion, email (office@uubedford.org) for the Zoom info
Thursdays, 5:30-6:30PM	Junior & Senior Youth Choirs	Janet Welby	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86016021142?pwd=RE9ucUFzTGllde15d2szNnArTKkrUT09
Thursdays at 7:30PM	Story Time for Children	Ministerial Staff	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/771525457
Thursdays at 7:30PM	Adult Choir Check-in and Rehearsal	Brad Conner	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/197342633?pwd=bVpicUxNVHJkdnNINFoxRkJ1UINEdz09
First Friday of ea mo at 6:30PM	First Friday Potluck	Ron Green, convener	https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87697104799?pwd=K2Zad1V0ZndEUCtmRDVmb2l5VUdUZz09
First Sunday of ea mo @ 4PM	Storytelling Group	Peter Ash	Open to all – If you'd like to join in, email (office@uubedford.org) for the Zoom info
Bi-weekly on Sundays @ 7PM	Parents Support Group	Rev Annie & Deb Weiner	Please contact dre@uubedford.org if you would like to join in and need the Zoom link