



# The Parishioner

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

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

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**Rev. Annie Gonzalez Milliken**, minister of faith development  
**Lisa Maria Andreoli Steinberg**, director of faith development for children  
**Sarah Klockowski**, youth coordinator

**Jennifer McClain**, parish board president  
**Carla Bradford**, editor  
**Bradford Conner**, music/choir director  
**Janet Welby**, youth choir director  
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Starting July 11<sup>th</sup>, we will be holding Sunday summer services of various kinds. (Note: No service on July 4.) We expect these services will be outdoors, on Zoom, or possibly both. We are not expecting to be worshipping inside the building yet. We may add services on August 8, 22 & 29 as the summer progresses. Look for emails coming out on the ParishBiz email list with updates about our summer services.

**Sunday, July 11 at 10AM:** Janet Powers and others from the Environmental Justice Committee will lead an outdoor service honoring our connection to the earth with sensory experiences and small group discussion. We are trying to make this service accessible via zoom as well as in person outdoors. If raining, we will be fully on zoom. This service will be a hint of what is to come next year with our congregational book read, Braiding Sweetgrass. Books will be available for sale immediately following the service (\$5 exact change or check written out to Corinne Doud). Stay tuned!

**Sunday, July 18 at 10AM:** Rev. Annie Gonzalez will lead a zoom service on being creative revolutionaries and how what we pay attention to grows. She'll be joined by a UU young adult from California to explore the spiritual practice of creating tiny pockets of the world we want to live in.

**Sunday, July 25 at 10AM:** Join musician and itinerant preacher Matt Meyer on zoom for a fun rhythm-filled worship service. Matt has led music and worship for UU congregations all over the U.S. and Canada. He has a degree in hand drumming from Berklee College of Music and he is also the Director of Community Life at The Sanctuary Boston, a contemporary worship community grounded in UU that meets in Boston and Cambridge.

**Sunday, August 1 at 10AM:** Join Marge Heckman and Liz Connors for a worship service centered on spiritual practices.

**Sunday, August 8:** TBD.

**Sunday, August 15 at 10AM:** Come meet our new Director of Faith Development for Children and her family at this outdoor worship service. Lisa Maria Andreoli Steinberg will offer an experiential worship on belonging.



**Next deadline for submissions is August 22<sup>nd</sup>**

## Minister's Musings

On the Common yesterday we had a little family fun day with picnics and lawn games. It was sweet and we used up the last of the Bedford Farms ice cream that had been scooped for John's big goodbye. At that gathering a parishioner who works in the schools was telling a story about how she began crying at her school's 5th grade graduation hearing the phrase "We made it!" and thinking "did we make it? is it over?" Another parishioner started welling up as she talked about her kid asking "what's in there?" about the door to the sanctuary in our church; it had been so long since the kid had been inside.

Both of these people apologized, as if the tears were an awkward inconvenience. But I'm here to say, if you start crying as you realize how much we've lost and how hard it's been, let it flow. If you start crying tears of bitter-sweet joy when you hug someone you haven't seen in ages or revisit the inside of a favorite place, let it flow. If your moments of being overwhelmed are not related to COVID, but instead are about a death, illness, injury, or big transition, let those flow too.

This is a time to savor the joys as they come in the form of sweet summer days and safer gatherings, and a time to cry the tears whenever they visit. Here we are. We made it. Through the school year, church year, through pulling off a fabulous retirement celebration for John along with honoring Deb and Joan. Through a wild time of ups and downs that has no clear ending. Here we are. Let's feel it and be here and keep moving forward together.

~ Annie

## The Bedford Lyceum - A Call for IDEAS & RECOMMENDATIONS!

### *The Bedford Lyceum needs Y-O-U!*

The Bedford Lyceum is a free forum on the arts, science, spirituality, and justice – made possible by the First Parish in Bedford.

Have an intriguing idea for a lecture? Can you recommend a great speaker?

The next Lyceum lecture series is scheduled to re-start in September. But we need YOUR ideas, leads, and suggestions so we can have another TERRIFIC year!

We'd love to hear from you!

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

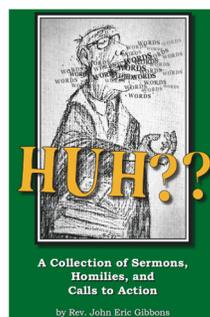
Thank you!



Since the First Parish music program is dormant this month because of the summer break, nonetheless, I have some exciting news to offer. While we're still polishing off the paperwork, we're delighted to announce

**Sandra LaBarge-Neumann** has been hired to become the new First Parish organist and accompanist to the adult choir. Sandra came to us with a strong resume and excellent references. The culmination of her interview process was a "live" presentation on our historic Hook and Hastings organ in front of the Music Committee and a few invited guests. The feedback was extremely positive. We look forward to being able to greet Sandra in person at some point in the future and there is a plan for her to play a short program after a Sunday service sometime in September of October. Let's all join together to welcome Sandra to our beloved First Parish community!

—Bradford Conner, Music Director



## HUH?? A Collection of Sermons, Homilies, and Calls to Action - Sale Continues...

The Collection of Sermons, etc. by John Gibbons flew off the table at the celebration on June 19th! So that we don't create a backlog of books (thinking of the boxes of 2006 Cookbooks...) — the best way to get your copy (copies) now is to go to Amazon to order it. [486 pages for only \$20.00!] Here is the link to do that:

<https://smile.amazon.com/HUH-Collection-Sermons-Homilies-Action/dp/B0942L8GTD>

(Forget not that "First Parish of Bedford" can be the benefitting charity on Amazon Smile.)

Two more things:

- Thing One—proceeds from the sale of these books go to the John Gibbons Fund for Student Ministry, to honor John's legacy of teaching.
- Thing Two—if you are waiting for the Kindle version of *HUH??*, it should be ready later on this summer! (Watch this space)

—Nancy Daugherty

## Dedication of the new drinking fountain, words by Rev. Megan Lynes:

Greetings!! How often we lift our voices with these words:

*Come, Thou Fount of every blessing,  
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace; (\*our hearts)  
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,  
Call for songs of loudest praise.*

I love this hymn. But have you ever wondered what this fount of every blessing would look like? I have! Sometimes I've pictured a baptismal font, and other times I imagined something nature-based like a geyser at Yellowstone. BUT now that I've seen this gorgeous creative invention, there is no unseeing it! The fount of every blessing is right here in our memorial garden! And we are about to dedicate it!

In true First Parish spirit, this fountain welcomes all – most noticeably those who are tall, medium height or seated in a wheelchair, and those who are very short ... or furry. If you aren't social distancing, you can even have a drink alongside your friend or pet.



The Gurgling Gibb was commissioned in honor of John's 31 years of ministry here. As we well know, John himself has been a life force, an inspiration and a healing balm to so many, many people. It seems only fitting that his energy is behind and a part of something life giving and good.

I hear that many names have been circling around, and that the most popular is The Gurgling Gibb. It's a name that made John smile and so it has stuck, since that's what we all wish upon John at his retirement (that he will be able to look back and smile and look forward and smile too.)

Today on this momentous occasion, we dedicate our fountain to life! May all who come here thirsty, find their thirst quenched with cool fresh water. May all who come seeking mercy, find streams never ceasing, May all who need to wake up, find water aplenty to splash on their face, and may all who come for laughter, for renewal, for joy, find it here in highest praise.

From this day forward, let the Gurgling Gibb be a fount of every blessing to this spirited community here, and beyond.

And last but not least we need a demonstration! Let's have three people: tall, medium, short. Because John's playful spirit is so much a part of who we are as a community today, I feel it is only fitting to issue forth from the fountain, an inaugural ... water balloon or two! I will leave it to the young people of First Parish to launch a few water balloons this afternoon. Three cheers to life! Three cheers to you John!



## Stewardship Note

Thank you for your generous support during the FY22 Stewardship Campaign. To date we have received 206 pledges for a total of \$500,526 pledged.

Although the church activities slow down over the summer, a steady cash flow is still needed to pay the bills. Your pledges can be paid at any time and in any amount. Payments can be made by check sent to the First Parish 75 Great Road, Bedford, MA 01730 or through Give Plus accessed through the church web site.

—Vicki Gaw, Treasurer

## Pastoral Care

During the month of July, Rev. Annie Gonzalez will be the best contact for pastoral care, since John will be retired and our new interim minister will not yet have started. Annie's cell is 309-310-2341 and you are encouraged to call or text for pastoral emergencies. You can also email her at [agonzalez@uubedford.org](mailto:agonzalez@uubedford.org) for less urgent pastoral issues.

Annie will be on vacation from July 29th - August 7th. During that time, she can be reached by cell for emergencies. Other pastoral resources you can rely on during that time include the Lay Pastoral Care team who consist of Marge Heckman, Liz Hanegan, Sandy Boczenowski, Maria Green, Nancy Daugherty, Susan Lincoln, Bob Batt, Laurie Groves and Stacy Chandler. You can also reach Maureen Richichi, a death doula and retired nurse, or Tina Nappi, a social worker, during Annie's vacation for pastoral support. Contact information for these parishioners can be found in our directory.

## ACCESS for ALL

Hi, all. ACCESS for ALL would appreciate any suggestions you have for our service for this coming year. More from each of us? Questions and answers, more guest speakers, new topics or topics revisited? Maybe no Access service this year? Any and all thoughts welcome. Email [lvorderer@comcast.net](mailto:lvorderer@comcast.net), or call 781-275-5230. Thanks.

—Lee Vorderer



## Environmental Justice Committee (EJC)

### EJC Committee Members

Co-Chairs of EJC this year are Cecile Mercado and Corinne Doud. EJC committee members are: Renu Bostwick, Erin Dorr, Corinne Doud, Holly Hosmer, Don MacIver, Cecile Mercado, Janet Powers, Brown Pulliam, Lois Pulliam, and we welcome Sarah Sjostrom! We look forward to a great year of environmental justice First Parish action! Also, please let us know if you have expertise in divestment from fossil fuels funds as we plan to facilitate discussions with the congregation around divestment.

### Get your *Braiding Sweetgrass* book for \$5.00!

*Braiding Sweetgrass* books are in (more than half are already sold)! To buy your book from EJC for the **GREAT price of \$5.00/book**, please complete this Order Form so we can track books sold, then pick up book from either:

**Brenda Rybicki, Parish Administrator** (email: [office.uubedford@gmail.com](mailto:office.uubedford@gmail.com) church phone: 781-275-7994).

**Books can be picked up at the church office Monday through Friday between 9:00am-4:00pm, OR FROM:**

EJC member **Janet Powers who lives near the church** (contact Janet to arrange a time to pick up the book, her email is [yapofarm@gmail.com](mailto:yapofarm@gmail.com))

**July 11:** Books will be available at church immediately following the July 11<sup>th</sup> outdoor Sunday service.

**PAYMENT:** \$5.00 as either exact change cash, check written out to Corinne Doud, or Venmo to Corinne Doud (@Corinne-Doud)

The first Book Discussion (focusing on the first chapter) will be Sunday, **Sept. 19<sup>th</sup> at noon** following the service (bring your own lunch).

***Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*** by Robin Wall Kimmerer: *“As a botanist, Robin Wall Kimmerer has been trained to ask questions of nature with the tools of science. As a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, she embraces the notion that plants and animals are our oldest teachers. In Braiding Sweetgrass, Kimmerer brings these lenses of knowledge together to show that the awakening of a wider ecological consciousness requires the acknowledgement and celebration of our reciprocal relationship with the rest of the living world. For only when we can hear the languages of other beings are we capable of understanding the generosity of the earth, and learning to give our own gifts in return.”*

Note: EJC selected this book as the **First Parish common read for this coming year**. Instead of having one or two book discussions as done in the past, we are working in collaboration with Faith Development to weave in the book’s themes throughout the church year as the **Earth Connections: A Spiritual Exploration of Braiding Sweetgrass** program. Stay tuned, you will be hearing more about it, but for now this is a great opportunity to get the book and read it over the summer!



Words by Judith Frediani were read at the interment of *Jack Mendelsohn's ashes* in our Memorial Garden on 6/21... Also on 6/21, we remembered the life of *Kenny Alexander*, burying his ashes as well... On 6/20, bricks remembering *Kay and David McClain*, John McClain’s parents, were dedicated in our Memorial Garden. John Gibbons was present for all of these.

### News from the Parish Nose...

*Laura Adams* has a new hip!... *Ed Schwartz* is in rehab following adjustments to his new hip... *Trudy Sadeghpour*, too, is in rehab after breaking her leg. “This is just like a spiritual retreat,” she says!... Congratulations to *Hillary DeMello*, winner of the Great Pie Safe Auction! ... *Bob Logcher* faces a bunch of tests and



medical michigas... Out-of-staters at John’s Common farewell included *Roger and Chia-Yin Hurst* from Connecticut, *Sheri Smith* and husband *Doug* from Minnesota, *Carol and Mike Akillian* - as well as *Yoma and Bill Ingraham* - from NH, and *Brigid and Mark Norton* and Family from NY... Congratulations to *Deb Picciuto* whose daughter *Elisabeth* will be married in September... *Sandra Seitz* is temporarily living with the Pollitz/Kalb’s pending medical treatment... Ask *Chris Wojnar* about the new Bedford Peace Poles Project... *Gail Black* is now a grandmother to a baby boy (Art Smith remembers his name, I don’t). Gail’s daughter *Catherine* is the new mom... It is with great joy that *Terri SooHoo* would like the world to know that she married her best friend and soul-mate, *Debbie Sylvester* on June 12 at First Parish with Rev. Megan Lynes officiating!... *Gail Woodbury* in VT sends her greetings to all her friends at FPB.... --tpn

### Plant Sale-ish?

Anyone interested in planning for some sort of plant-related event at First Parish this fall should contact Dorothy Africa ([dorothy.africa@gmail.com](mailto:dorothy.africa@gmail.com)). This would not be a town wide event, but something more modest for First Parish. If there is sufficient interest, we can use this event as a trial for a larger event in spring 2022.

