



The Parishioner

News of the First Parish in Bedford

Unitarian Universalist

On the Common, Bedford, Massachusetts

Spirit...Justice...Community

Volume 55, Issue 3

November 2021

Rev. Wendy Bell, interim minister
Rev. Annie Gonzalez, minister of faith development
Lisa Maria Andreoli Steinberg, director of faith development for children
Sarah Klockowski, youth coordinator
Rev. John Gibbons, minister emeritus

Jennifer McClain, parish board president
Carla Bradford, editor
Bradford Conner, music/choir director
Janet Welby, youth choir director
Sandra LaBarge-Neumann, organist
Brenda Rybicki, parish administrator
Stacey Katz, acting assistant parish administrator
Samuel Coiro, Jr., sexton/custodian

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Upcoming Sunday Services*

*If we can't gather outdoors, please join us via ZOOM. Link can be found at:
<https://www.uubedford.org/worship/upcoming-services/>

Remember to turn
back your clocks



November 7th

Title: "Don't Carry It All".

Can we hold space for large scale grief without carrying the burdens of our past? Come to explore feeling through loss without hanging on, with a testimony from Janet Powers on divesting from fossil fuels and a movement prayer from Carlough Faulkner-Carroll&Dorothy Anderson Perales.

November 14th

Title: "Telling our (True) Stories"

This morning we reflect on history as story. How do we tell the stories of our lives? How do we tell the history of a congregation? What do we include and what do we leave out...and why?

November 21st

Title: "Stone Soup: Gratitude & Generosity"

Rev. Annie and Lisa Maria lead an All Ages Worship about gratitude and generosity in anticipation of the Thanksgiving Holiday. We'll experience the story of Stone Soup and hear our Youth Choirs sing.

November 28th

Title: "A Work in Progress".

Each of us is a work in progress and many of us are quite different versions of ourselves than who we used to be. These personal transformations require courage and loss. What can we learn from who we used to be?

Next deadline is Nov. 28

The Parishioner is published monthly. Deadline is generally the last Sunday of each month. Send submissions to: editors@uubedford.org.

“In the Interim”

How delightful it has been to continue to meet more of you through the four “Getting to Know You” drop-in Zoom sessions in October! And how wonderful to witness the re-connecting you were able to do with one another! Clearly, many of us are longing for more opportunities to connect. So...here are some additional times scheduled for November:

- Wednesday, November 3rd from 7:00-8:00pm
- Tuesday, November 9th from 3:00-4:00pm
- Tuesday, November 16th from 7:00-8:00pm
- Thursday, November 18th from 11:00am-12:00pm

All of these will be on Zoom and links will be sent out the day before each session. Everyone is welcome to attend. Conversation will be informal, although I may surprise you with a particular topic – or you can suggest one!

In November, worship plans are loosely focused on the theme of “Holding History.” The first of the 5 so-called “focus points” of interim ministry involves “coming to terms with history.” As Roger S. Nicholson writes, “Every change in pastoral leadership is a unique opportunity for a local congregation to learn from its past, weigh its strengths and weaknesses, and prepare itself for a new future...” And so, that is the work that we begin this month!

Hope to see you soon!
- Rev. Wendy



Minister’s Musings

In *Braiding Sweetgrass* Robin Wall Kimmerer shares about a practice of the Onondaga Nation who live near her home in New York State called “The Thanksgiving Address.” No, this is not a speech about the holiday where people eat turkey. This is a daily spiritual practice of greeting various parts of creation with reverence and gratitude. She writes of this practice “The Thanksgiving Address reminds us that duties and gifts are two sides of the same coin. Eagles were given the gift of far sight, so it is their duty to watch over us...It is said that only humans have the capacity for gratitude. This is among our gifts.”

I see so many of you offering your gifts to this community. Those gifted in working with young people taking on responsibilities in teaching faith development and leading youth programs. Those gifted in music taking on the responsibility for singing for us. Those gifted in facilitation leading small groups. Those gifted in technology running sound or video. I could go on and on. As we move through this Thanksgiving season, I offer my gratitude to you all and encourage you to share yours with one another and with the natural world. This gift is our duty and our blessing.

- Rev. Annie



News from the Parish Board



As November approaches, please make a note of our **Semi-Annual Parish meeting on November 14th at 4:00 PM.** Our fifth principle calls on us to “use the democratic process within our congregation and in our society at large.” Your presence is important, so please come.

There will be various reports, including an update from our Sanctuary Committee, **and an important pair of warrant articles** addressing how our endowment should be invested with regard to fossil fuels and climate change. **This meeting will be on Zoom. Please find the link here:**

<https://zoom.us/j/99965464252?pwd=NHJRMEhDTUxTVkNaZkdYa2hXVmxUdz09>

On another note, the work of our interim minister continues. I have appreciated the questions she has asked as she works to get to know us better. These questions are helpful for us to know ourselves as well. Understanding what we value about First Parish will help us shape our choices moving forward. I hope you will be able to join Wendy for a drop-in session if you have not already.

Yours hopefully, Jennifer McClain – Board President

Faith Development for Children – From Lisa Maria

We have had a wonderful to start to classes in Faith Development for PreK-8th Grade. Our teaching teams have been extra helpful and flexible with the outside class location, and attendance has been steady. The Faith Development Committee has added members, and Judith Frediani is serving as chair. I continue to enjoy a warm welcome from young and old alike in the First Parish community- especially on the 24th of October at our All Ages Worship in the chilly fall air. If we haven't had a chance to meet yet- please reach out and introduce yourself. I will take time to get to know everyone, and I look forward to more opportunities in the coming months to connect with you.

Scholarships for Transylvania

For many years, First Parish has given annual scholarships of \$300 to teenagers from our partner village, Abásfalva, Romania, who are attending high school. Many First Parishioners have contributed – last year \$3300 - and how grateful the kids are!

This year, the new minister in Abásfalva, Rev. Zsolt Lurtz, has suggested to First Parish that there are also middle school students who deserve this incentive to continue their schooling. The Partner Church Committee has agreed to try to raise enough money to send \$200 to each of them as well. A total of 16 teenagers are active in the Abásfalva Unitarian Church.

Would you be willing to donate to this project? To give all or part of a scholarship, send the church your check made out to “First Parish in Bedford” with “Transylvania” on the memo line. For more information, email Sharon McDonald, Chair of the Partner Church Committee: shar.mcd77@gmail.com or 781-275-5643.

Musical Notes

"The thinnest yellow light of November is more warming and exhilarating than any wine they tell of. The mite which November contributes becomes equal in value to the bounty of July." – Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862)

Here's the planned music for upcoming 10 a.m. services (subject to change based on circumstances) –

Sunday, Nov. 7th: I will be playing piano. Trombonist William Sheahan, a soon-to-be graduate at Boston University, will be the guest instrumentalist for the morning. He will be playing transcriptions of movements from J.S. Bach's 2nd solo Cello Suite in d minor. He will also play a transcription of American composer Florence Price's meditative "Adoration". The service will also include a newly conceived "movement prayer" of music, movement and meditation created by Carlough Faulkner-Carroll and Dorothy Anderson Perales.

Sunday, Nov. 14th: Sandra LaBarge-Neumann will be playing organ. For the offertory the adult choir will be singing a favorite piece, Biebl's transcendent "Ave Maria" with soloists Cynthia Mork, Susan Barnaby and Larry Herz. For the prelude Cynthia Mork will be joined by Carol Epple – flute for the beautiful soprano aria from J.S. Bach's Cantata BWV 146.

Sunday, Nov. 21st: Steve Sussman will be playing piano and Sandra LaBarge-Neumann will play organ. For this intergenerational service Janet Welby will be leading all the youth choirs in music anticipating the Thanksgiving holiday.

Sunday, Nov. 28th: Steve Sussman will be playing piano.

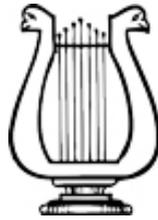
MARK YOUR CALENDARS! This is an early reminder that the ever-popular **Back Bay Ringers** will be returning for their biannual performance to ring in the holidays at First Parish on **Saturday afternoon, December 4, 2021 at 2 p.m.** Plan for a concert full of happy holiday spirit!

Isn't it time to think about joining the adult choir? If you're interested, e-mail me at bconner@uubedford.org Plans for the coming year include a Christmas Eve service filled with music around the theme of bells and Music Sunday 2022 (May 1, 2022) will be a Sunday of joyful music by favorite composers Handel, Haydn, Bach, Beethoven and a host of others.

Bradford Conner, Music Director



The Bedford Lyceum



Calling all SETI and astronomy enthusiasts!

Alan MacRobert, an editor of *Sky & Telescope* magazine, will be speaking about "**Life in the Universe: So Where Are They?**" on Sunday, November 7th from 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm via Zoom. Please join us for this intriguing presentation.

Alan MacRobert has been covering the SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) beat for decades. Astronomical searches are better than ever. Planets are abundant. Life seems to start quickly. So why haven't we found ETs yet -- and more pressingly, why haven't they found us? A life-covered Earth has been sitting in plain view for the galaxy for at least 400 million years. Alan will brief us on the state of the debate today.

Alan has been an editor for *Sky & Telescope* magazine in Cambridge since 1982. He became fascinated with the deep paradoxes regarding life in the universe when he read Carl Sagan's Intelligent Life in the Universe at age 14. In addition to his keen interest in SETI, Alan's specialties at *Sky & Telescope* magazine have included astronomical research news coverage and articles about upcoming celestial events for amateur astronomers. Alan has also been a science correspondent for the *Boston Globe* where he wrote their monthly "Sky Watch" column.

*** First Parish in Bedford is proud to present this talk as part of its free, monthly forums (lyceums) on a wide range of topics. All talks are free and open to the public. Registration is not required. ***

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82036799516?pwd=cE04Q0RZK0lwUGp3MDJCeHhzeWJuUT09>

Meeting ID: 820 3679 9516

Passcode: 247480

One tap mobile +16465588656,,82036799516#,,,,*247480#

By phone +1 646 558 8656

Questions? Please contact Ellen at mountainbreeze52@gmail.com

Stewardship Update

Pledge payments and donations make it possible for the church to continue its important work. Pledges or donations can be paid in any amount at any time. You can make a pledge payment or a donation by sending a check by mail to First Parish Bedford 75 Great Road Bedford, MA 01730, donate electronically using the Give Plus link on our web site or texting **1-833-765-0091** on your smart phone. (Credit card information will be required).

The bookkeeping transition from Genevieve Jones to Brenda, our Office Manager, is underway. There are many steps to the process including transferring files from Genevieve's QuickBooks system to the church's. Your continued patience is appreciated while this transition occurs. I always welcome any finance related questions or concerns you may have. Thank you.

- Vicki Gaw, Treasurer

November Caring Network

If you or someone you know at First Parish needs temporary assistance with meals or rides to medical appointments, please let us know. We have a team of volunteers who are ready to help. The Coordinator for the month of November is Sandy Boczenowski. Call 781-222-4094 or 617-943-0691. You can also reach out by email: sandyboz@gmail.com.

We are in need of additional monthly coordinators. The monthly coordinator either reaches out by phone or email to our list of many volunteers. Quite often the coordinator sets up a Sign Up Genius form to reach out to the entire First Parish community. As soon as a form is sent to the announcement list, our amazing community responds very quickly to care for fellow parishioners. Let me know if you would like to join the network as either a cook, driver, or as a coordinator.

Sandy Boczenowski

Wheel of Life

Alma and Brian Hart's daughter Elizabeth was married to Ryan Mahoney on October 10 at the Maynard Rod & Gun Club. A 30-minute cease fire was declared for the ceremony. In his final Covid-delayed wedding, John Gibbons officiated. Congratulations!.... In less cheerful news, Martha King succumbed to a long battle with cancer on October 13. Martha grew up in Bedford. She was the daughter of Emily and Paul King--long-time First Parishioners who passed away some years ago.... Our thoughts are with Chris Gittins whose father John Gittins died on October 22nd after a steady decline. We also hold his wife Stacy and kids Isabel and Henry in our hearts as they navigate this loss.... Lastly the memorial service for Dave and Ginny Packer that was meant to happen in October was postponed due to COVID to July 30th 2022 in Bedford.

~Annie

Earth Connections Team

Our next Earth Connections session will be Nov. 21 following worship and will be a book discussion of Section 2 of *Braiding Sweetgrass*. We will have a zoom option, and possibly an in-person option as well; stay tuned! We'll be using the discussion guide below: you are welcome to come whether or not you have read the book!

Section 2: Tending Sweetgrass

Maple Sugar Moon:

“Nanabozho made certain that the work would never be too easy. His teachings remind us that one half of the truth is that the earth endows us with great gifts, the other half is that the gift is not enough...It is our work, and our gratitude, that distills the sweetness.”

How do you feel about Nanabozho diluting the sap to help the people remember their duties? Do you have experiences where making a task harder made you appreciate it more?

Witch Hazel:

“There ain't nothing better than a good neighbor.”

What is your relationship with your neighbors? Why are neighbors so important?

A Mother's Work:

“I spend countless hours improving the water quality of my half-acre pond.so that my kids can swim in clear water, while standing silent on the cleanup of Onondaga, where no one can swim.” Robin asks, “In one short life where does responsibility lie?”

How do you answer that question and how do you find balance in responsibility?

The Consolation of Water Lilies:

“Our work and our joy is to pass along the gift and to trust that what we put out into the universe will always come back.”

Kimmerer is reflecting on her days of active parenting, but this quote can apply to many projects. When have you had to let go of something you were working on, tending or caring for, whether children or something else?

Allegiance to Gratitude:

“The Thanksgiving Address reminds us that duties and gifts are two sides of the same coin...If gifts and responsibilities are the same, then asking “what is our responsibility?” is the same as asking “What is our gift?”

Does viewing responsibility as related to gifts shift how you think of responsibility? What gifts do you possess and what responsibilities are they connected to?



Women's Book Group November Meeting

Please join us on Sunday, November 14 to discuss the book "Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents" by Isabel Wilkerson. The meeting will take place on Zoom, starting at 7:00 p.m. Please e-mail Margaret Jackson (mjacksonfpb@yahoo.com) for the zoom link.

From "Caste":

"As we go about our daily lives, caste is the wordless usher in a darkened theater, flashlight cast down in the aisles, guiding us to our assigned seats for a performance. The hierarchy of caste is not about feelings or morality. It is about power—which groups have it and which do not."

The books/dates for the rest of the church year:

Meeting Date	Book	Author
12/12/2021	Anxious People	Fredrik Backman
1/9/2022	Book Swap	Corinne's House
2/27/2022	A Knock At Midnight: A Story of Hope, Justice and Freedom	Brittany K. Barnett
4/10/2022	What We Carry: A Memoir	Maya Shanbhag Lang
5/22/2022	Klara and the Sun	Kazuo Ishiguro
6/12/2022	Book Selection for following year	

Moving Forward with the Interim Process

The Committee on Ministry (COM) has been in discussion with Rev. Wendy and Rev. Annie about how the overall interim process may proceed here at FP. Based on these discussions, we want to share our thoughts with you.

The interim period in our church presents us with the opportunity to reflect, reimagine ourselves, and chart a path forward. Our charge over the next year is to examine our history, explore our structures and processes, and clarify what we want (and don't want) as a congregation. The interim path is well-trodden and planted with signposts. We have reviewed the books *In the Interim* and *The Janus Workbook*, which we highly recommend to all.

Why go through this congregational introspection during the interim? It is the best way to ensure a healthy transition and future. Inevitably, after any long ministry like John's we need to pause and understand who we are without John's leadership. What are our priorities? What are our hopes and dreams for this beloved community?

Our wonderful Interim Minister Rev. Wendy is here to coach and guide us. And yet, the real work is on us! We hope you will join the conversations and engage in the congregational activities that will be announced soon.

Tina Nappi, Marge Heckman and Larry Herz

THE WARRANT

THE FIRST PARISH IN BEDFORD, UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
BEDFORD, MIDDLESEX COUNTY, COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

MIDDLESEX SS:

To the Clerk, First Parish in Bedford

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts you are hereby authorized and instructed to notify the legal voters of said First Parish in Bedford in the County of Middlesex to meet remotely via Zoom on Sunday, the fourteenth day of November, 2021, at four o'clock in the afternoon and then and there to act on the following articles, viz:

- I. To appoint a Minutes Committee. This group of three people will be responsible for reviewing the Clerk's minutes of the meeting in a timely manner, prior to being presented for a vote by the parish.
- II. To hear and act upon the minutes of the Parish Meeting held on June 13, 2021.
- III. To hear the reports of the Ministers, Director of Faith Development for Children, Parish Board President, and the Treasurer.
- IV. To hear a report from the Sanctuary Committee.
- V. To hear a report from the Environmental Justice Committee.
- VI. To vote on a petitioner's resolution, titled 2021 FOSSIL FUEL DIVESTMENT RESOLUTION, submitted by the Environmental Justice Committee and attached to this warrant.
- VII. To vote on a petitioner's proposed amendment to the By-Laws of First Parish in Bedford, submitted by the Environmental Justice Committee and attached to this warrant.
- VIII. To hear from any members of the congregation who have short statements (less than three minutes) that they wish to make to the assembled group.

You are directed to serve this Warrant by posting an attested copy thereof at the Meeting House eight days, including two Sundays, before the fourteenth day of November, 2021 and to return this warrant with your doings thereon at said meeting.

Witness our hands this 27th day of October in the year 2021.

The Parish Board:

Jenn McClain, President
Deb Bodeau, Victoria Gaw, Chris Gittins
Alan MacRobert, David Southard, Sarah Dorer

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/99965464252?pwd=NHJRMEhDTUxTVkNaZkdYa2hXVmxUdz09>

Meeting ID: 999 6546 4252

Passcode: 967891

One tap mobile +19292056099,,99965464252#

By phone +1 929 205 6099 US