



# The Parishioner

News of the First Parish in Bedford

Unitarian Universalist

On the Common, Bedford, Massachusetts

*Spirit...Justice...Community*

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**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  
**Jennifer McClain**, parish board president  
**Rev. John Gibbons**, minister emeritus

**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\*

\*While we can’t gather in person, please join us via ZOOM. Link can be found at: <https://www.uubedford.org/worship/upcoming-services/>

### February 6<sup>th</sup>

Title: “Five Smooth Stones” – Rev. Wendy

James Luther Adams, pre-eminent UU theologian of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was said to have loved the Biblical story of David, the underdog shepherd, defeating Goliath with a sling shot and five smooth stones. Inspired by that story, Adams wrote about what he called “the five smooth stones of liberal religion.” This morning, we take a new look at those old stones and ask how they might help us in our struggles against the “Goliaths” of today.

### February 13<sup>th</sup>

Title: “Pick a Side and Draw it Wide” – Rev. Annie

There is a tension in our social movements and values between siding with love and drawing our circles wide. We’ll explore the balance between the two and how to live in that tension of staying clear on our principles and staying in relationship with those who differ.

### February 20<sup>th</sup>

Title: “Drawing Our Circles Wide” – Lisa Maria and Rev. Annie

In this multigenerational service we’ll explore what inclusion can look like from different perspectives. Does every circle have to be for everyone?

### February 27<sup>th</sup>

Title: “Belonging: The Meaning of Membership” – Rev. Wendy

This morning we’ll reflect together on what it means to be a member of a Unitarian Universalist Church. We’ll think about lofty things like belonging, community, commitment, engagement, transformation, and maybe even the Hokey Pokey.

**Next deadline is Feb. 27**

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

## "In the Interim"

As I write, we have 2 ½ feet of snow in our backyard, and it is hard to imagine that, somewhere in the frozen soil under those deep drifts, there are little white snowdrops preparing to sprout and bloom. I am reminded of a short poem, "February 2, 1968," by Wendell Berry:

*In the dark of the moon, in flying snow, in the  
dead of winter,  
war spreading, families dying, the world in  
danger,  
I walk the rocky hillside, sowing clover.*

Clover, though its seeds are small, produces an extensive root system, which fixes nitrogen, heals the soil, and nourishes whatever gets planted next. And what he's describing is a set of biodynamic farming practices – planting by the moon to encourage stronger root growth, sowing on top of snow to encourage proper seed distribution when the snow melts, as the northern hemisphere tips back toward the sun. In other words, February 2<sup>nd</sup> was an opportune time to sow seeds in 1968.

It is a most hopeful little poem. It reminds us that we are called to take small actions at opportune (though perhaps counterintuitive times) to help heal the world, trusting that they will pay off eventually. That is faith.

May we, too, sow seeds of hope in a hurting world!

- Rev. Wendy



## Minister's Musings

Did you know that you all were the inspiration for a sermon I preached to the UU Church of Annapolis in mid-January? I was invited, along with my housemate Rev. Elizabeth Nguyen, to co-preach a sermon at a blessing of ministry for Rev. John Crestwell Jr. and Rev. Anastassia Zinke, being installed as "Ministers of Equal Standing" at their congregation. Rev. John had been serving as a second minister there for 13 years, and Rev. Anastassia is newly on board, having done her internship there over a decade ago. This particular framing for shared ministry is a new model, one that no other church is using. So, they wanted two ministers preaching together at the installation, a message for uncertainty and trying new things, especially since their last minister was the senior minister of 34 years who retired a few years earlier.

As I prepared with my housemate for this service, we decided our message would be "we are becoming what we need to become, together in uncertainty." I spoke about our congregation, our big staff transitions and ministerial retirement in a pandemic. I shared the story of working with Lisa Maria and Brad and Janet on shifting our Christmas Eve plans for all ages over and over. I talked about the stress and chaos and the carols we didn't know all the words to around the fire out on the common. And then I talked about the sacred moment of singing Silent Night together, with our candles, despite it all. I could see the few in person attendees at the installation nodding hopefully. I'm sure the many others on zoom were doing the same.

I wanted to share this story so you know that you are inspiring to other UU communities and that you are not alone in these transitions you are going through. Times are certainly wild, there is no doubt, and we are becoming what we need to become, together in uncertainty.

- Rev. Annie



## Musical Notes

“Music allows us to tap into that innate desire to grow that is already within us, that desire to move toward wholeness, that desire to heal.” – James Borling, director of music therapy and professor *emeritus* of music therapy at Radford University (Radford, VA)

Here’s the planned music for 10 a.m. services in the upcoming month (pandemic willing) –

**Sunday, February 6<sup>th</sup>:** Steve Sussman will be playing piano. Dorothy Anderson-Perales will be dancing to the ever-beloved “Spirit of Life”.

**Sunday, February 13<sup>th</sup>:** Steve Sussman will be playing piano and the adult choir is planning to sing three songs about different aspects of Love: the divine *Ubi caritas* by English composer Paul Mealor, the sublime “O Love” by American composer Elaine Hagenberg, and favorite “All You Need is Love” by Beatles John Lennon and Paul McCartney (more Lennon than McCartney).

**Sunday, February 20<sup>th</sup>:** I will be playing piano and plan to play appropriate pieces for wintertime. Rescheduled from Sunday, January 30<sup>th</sup>'s snowed-out service, the postlude will be Schubert’s masterpiece “The Shepherd on the Rock” with Cynthia Mork – soprano, Elizabeth Connors – clarinet and, of course, me (on piano).

**Sunday, February 27<sup>th</sup>:** Steve Sussman will be playing piano.

**Mark your calendars!** The Music Committee is going to host the annual Valentine’s concert. It will be on Sunday, February 13, 2022 at 4 p.m. in our sanctuary. If the circumstances allow it, there will be a small in-person audience, but, whatever the case, it will be broadcast on Zoom. “Love Songs We Love” will be a collection of favorite songs and instrumental pieces performed by Cynthia Mork and Benjamin Sears – vocals, Nathan Kimball – cello and me on piano. The program will include songs like “Hello, Young Lovers”, “Falling in Love with Love” and the Meditation from Massenet’s *Thaïs*. Come and hear great music! This concert isn’t just for lovers! See more details elsewhere in this newsletter.

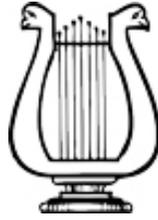
Look for an invitation to show your love for our beloved community by sending First Parish a valentine! More information is coming the week before the concert!

Why not think about joining choir! If you’re interested, e-mail me at [bconner@uubedford.org](mailto:bconner@uubedford.org) Musical plans for the remainder of the church year feature various delights on Easter, Good Friday and Music Sunday 2022 (May 1, 2022) which will feature joyful music by favorite composers Handel, Haydn, Bach, Beethoven and a host of others.

Bradford Conner, Music Director



## The Bedford Lyceum



***There will be no Lyceum this February, but the Lyceum returns in March!***

Please join us for a fascinating presentation by **Larry Herz** on **Sunday, March 6<sup>th</sup> from 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm** via **Zoom**. Title: **Circadian and Other Biological Rhythms**

How do biological clocks work? What happens when they go wrong, from birth or later in life? Why aren't they off all the time? We'll talk about how our bodies experience, process, and use time.

*Larry Herz is a retired psychiatrist (mostly at the Bedford VA and Boston University). He was a clinician, educator, clinic chief, service chief, and researcher, and has almost 40 years of interest in (but no papers on) chronobiology.*

**Zoom Link:** <https://zoom.us/j/97170989460?pwd=dzN0QUxTSg5NUjRTNXFHh1RrRThqQT09>

Meeting ID: 971 7098 9460

Passcode: 894900

One tap mobile +13017158592,,97170989460#

By phone +1 301 715 8592

Questions? Please contact Ellen at [mountainbreeze52@gmail.com](mailto:mountainbreeze52@gmail.com)

**\*\* First Parish in Bedford is proud to host this presentation as part of The Bedford Lyceum, a monthly lecture series on a wide range of topics. All talks are free and open to the public. Registration is not required. \*\***

## Stewardship Update

Your 2021 pledge statements are in process, and you will be receiving them soon. Thank you for your ongoing support for the work of this church.

- Vicki Gaw, Treasurer



## Social Responsibility Committee

Our Share the Plate collection for January was directed to the International Institute of New England in Lowell. As noted in an email sent out last month, this organization was originally designated to receive the October donation. Due to a variety of factors, that donation was sent to the Greater Boston Food Bank instead. Thus, the January donation was designated for IINE. The amount of that donation is still pending. We again invite all parishioners to consider organizations they support as possible recipients for our Share the Plate collection. 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 of the month. At our January meeting, we approved the following grant:

- **Jon Sills African American and Latino Tenacity Challenge 2022** - submitted by Sarah Dorer The Tenacity Challenge is an academic scholarship competition for Latino and African-American students sponsored by the Bedford Public Schools that First Parish has proudly sponsored for several years.

We encourage you to submit a proposal for a social outreach project of education and awareness, service, or social action that you would like to see funded this year. Our next meeting is Wednesday, February 9th. Get those proposals in for consideration this month!

Offerings from our Christmas service this year were equally split between:

- USA UNHRC, UN High Commissioner for Refugees -- \$694.65
- The Sunrise Movement - \$694.64

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. If you have trouble downloading the form, please email Marge and she will send you a copy. We are in the process of updating the forms so they can be filled out electronically. Any comments or questions can be directed to Marge Heckman, SRC chair, at [maheckman@gmail.com](mailto:maheckman@gmail.com).

## What's Up with the Auction?



Well, that's a very good question! With the pandemic continuing to throw curveballs, it has been difficult to imagine, let alone plan, the sort of in-person event we all love. Even though the Auction serves to raise funds, its primary purpose has always been to create a wonderful community-building social event. There *\*will\** be an Auction this church year and we have been dreaming up other ways forward that still focus on togetherness and community. If you would like to imagine with us, please email! Dawn Le France Linden: [lafrancelinden@verizon.net](mailto:lafrancelinden@verizon.net) and Catherine Gaw Van Praagh: [cvgawvanpraagh@gmail.com](mailto:cvgawvanpraagh@gmail.com)

## Black Earth Composting Resumption

First Parish is happy to announce that composting service at the church has resumed as of late January. As of now, the service is limited to FPB staff members and others who might happen to be in the building.

## Faith Development

I know we all miss gathering in person for Faith Development on Sunday mornings, and we look forward to a return of indoor classes, hopefully in late February. JYG has alternated between a strong group gathering on Zoom to play games and cook together and being able to meet outside around the fire pit. In exciting news, I am delighted to share that on Sunday February 6th our Faith Development programming for 2nd-8th graders will be a poetry workshop with the amazing Regie O'Hare Gibson. Spirit Play will gather for preK-1st grade that day. On February 13th, our plan is to gather together on Sunday morning outside to decorate the snow with colorful messages of love and justice as we celebrate Side With Love Day along with UUs across the country.

*Lisa Maria Andreoli Steinberg, Director of Faith Development*

## Board Matters

Many of you have asked questions about the transition process, so please consider this your update. We are 6 months into our transition period and have named a Transition Team to both support Reverend Wendy and to lay the groundwork for our Search Committee's work, which will begin this summer. The Transition Team is separate from the Search Committee, which we will all build together beginning in April, and culminating in our Annual Meeting in June.

Wendy shared a timeline in her Interim Update #1, which can be found here:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1C-d\\_IUPwID1iOGyLNfRJ5iPyyMzx53YpEe-j9YJyzqs/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1C-d_IUPwID1iOGyLNfRJ5iPyyMzx53YpEe-j9YJyzqs/edit?usp=sharing)

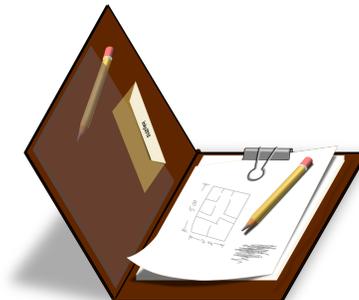
More information on the Transition Team's work can be found

here: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1l18yKXxn5nOY0b6KRbqVwoZWvf1DUFpy/edit?usp=sharing&oid=100284889478184912445&rtpof=true&sd=true>

One critical element that is not listed in the timeline is Stewardship. A congregation where every member takes responsibility for supporting the parish's mission by financially contributing is an engaged community, and thus attractive to potential ministerial candidates. We need volunteers to run the Stewardship Campaign this Spring. If you would consider volunteering, please reach out to me or Annie and we will answer questions and connect you with one another.

Thank you to the following parishioners who will make up the Transition Team:

Maureen Richichi  
Kath McCafferty  
Meredith McColloch  
Rebecca Green Neal  
Doug Muder  
Doug Denny-Brown  
Tina Nappi



*Jennifer McClain, Parish Board President*

## Women's Book Group News

We'll meet on Zoom on February 27 at 7 p.m. to discuss "A Knock At Midnight: A Story of Hope, Justice and Freedom" by Brittany K. Barnett.

From the Amazon Review: In this deeply personal memoir, Barnett shares how as a young Black girl she was surrounded by drugs growing up in the south—her mother, a nurse, at times was addicted to crack, and her boyfriend dealt drugs—how her family fueled her, why she pursued law, and became dedicated to defending those unfairly incarcerated for minor drug crimes.

The Zoom link will be posted on the church calendar and sent to the anno list the week of the meeting.

The books for the rest of the 2021-2022 church year are listed below:

2021 - 2022 Church Year Book Group Books		
Meeting Date	Book	Author
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	
	Annual Book Swap - Date To Be Determined	

Please contact Margaret Jackson with any questions, [mjacksonfpb@yahoo.com](mailto:mjacksonfpb@yahoo.com).

## Reminder about NEW Discussion Series!

There's still time to join us for a 3-part discussion series about race in America. This program – coordinated by Lois Pulliam, Sylvia Cowan, Maureen Richichi, Pam Foresman, and Ellen Scheiner -- will be based on the book *Uncomfortable Conversations With a Black Man* by Emmanuel Acho and accompanying video conversations from his YouTube channel. We hope to provide everyone with a safe, supportive, and confidential Zoom space --- where we can be open with each other, explore how racism impacts our lives and everyday actions, and find ways to make changes now to address this important issue.

**For information about this series**, please watch the YouTube recording of the Introductory Session, which was held February 1. The YouTube link will be made available in the Anno by Thursday, February 3.

**Interested?** Folks can now register for the 3 subsequent sessions -- which will be held from 7:00 PM – 8:15 PM on February 15, March 1, and March 15. Simply email Sylvia Cowan ([cowan.sylvia@gmail.com](mailto:cowan.sylvia@gmail.com)) or Lois Pulliam ([brownpulliam@gmail.com](mailto:brownpulliam@gmail.com)) with Subject Line: "Racial Conversations."

Those registering for the series are expected to attend all three sessions, as well as read a short section of Acho's book & watch a short video during the two weeks before the next session. Each session will include discussions for the entire group as well as in breakout rooms. Acho's book is now available for purchase to participants at a very steep discount. **Registration for these 3 sessions ends on Tuesday, February 8.**

**Questions?** Please contact Sylvia Cowan ([cowan.sylvia@gmail.com](mailto:cowan.sylvia@gmail.com)) or Ellen Scheiner ([ejscheiner@aol.com](mailto:ejscheiner@aol.com)) with Subject Line: "Racial Conversations."

## Parish Council

The Parish Council promotes communications between church committees and the Leadership Team regarding church programs, scheduling events, and annual budget planning. The Council meets quarterly during the church year. The next regularly scheduled meeting on **6:30pm, Tuesday February 8, 2022** will be held on zoom (please see the Zoom link below). We will discuss the use of OneChurch for committee activities. *All committee chairs or their representatives are invited to attend.*

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/95421762885?pwd=T2wra3RqUndOM2grM0dPT0E0THgzQT09>

Meeting ID: 954 2176 2885

Passcode: 817948

One tap mobile +13017158592,,95421762885#

By phone +1 301 715 8592

David Southard, Parish Council Chair, <[southard@computer.org](mailto:southard@computer.org)>

## News from the Parish Nose

Bedford's Minister Emeritus John Gibbons has been appointed as a community minister at Boston's Arlington Street Church. Working with the Rev. Kim Crawford Harvie, their senior minister, John's title is Minister for Good Trouble! Is that perfect, or what? Four of our wonderful First Parish youth were inducted into the National Honor Society this past week: Ricky McDowell, Sam Lincoln, Gray Hanegan and Cole Bennett. Congrats to them all! Larry and Pam Foresman celebrated the wedding of their son, David, to Victoria Sliwa on January 19<sup>th</sup> in St. John USVI. The wedding couple, their parents and sisters spent a week together, united in joy around this wonderful event.

As we celebrate with those who celebrate, we also grieve with those experiencing loss. With sadness we share that Rebekah Angus, daughter of Robert Angus (Sara) died after a brief illness. And in heartbreaking news, Dot Ellis shares that Chance, the son of her son Dave's former partner Hillary, died by suicide. Though Dave was no longer actively in Chance's life, he was an important part of his upbringing and this loss is a painful one.

In other updates, Mary Hyatt shares a new address and phone:

Mary Hyatt

44 Nashua Rd., Apt. 325

N. Billerica, MA 01862

Phone: 978-330-1007

Her daughter Mira came from Florida to help her move to Kennedy Meadows in November, and she is pleased with the arrangement, meeting new people over meals.

Jerry Ross is recovering from surgery he had on Jan 20<sup>th</sup> after various setbacks and complications along the way. He has had wonderful support from his partner Kathi and son Eric, as well as from this community and is grateful for everyone who reaches out. In local politics, our own Shawn Hanegan is running for one of two seats on the Bedford Select Board in the March 12 town election so if you are a Bedford resident be sure to learn more and vote. Bea Brunkhorst is happy to announce that she is running again for Board of Health. If you are curious- go the [beabrunkhorstboardofhealth](#) Facebook page.

January has been quite a month! As omicron rates go down and snow piles up we are looking forward to longer days and more ability to gather. Thanks to all who submitted an update for the Parish Nose! We appreciate you keeping our community connected.

## Earth Connections

“Braiding Sweetgrass” Book Discussion Feb. 20 1:00 pm

Join us (via Zoom) for the next Braiding Sweetgrass book discussion on Sunday Feb 20 at 1:00 pm. Whether or not you’ve read **Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants** by **Robin Wall Kimmerer** or made it to the previous book discussions, you are welcome to zoom in for this one! The discussion questions will focus on Section 4 of the book and a Zoom link will be sent out via email to the announcement email list closer to the event. The link will be noted on the church calendar and will also sent out to the announcement email list.

*Corinne Doud, Earth Connections Team*

## Access for All

Some more information about ZOOM, which comes in two flavors: the Basic one, which is free to everyone who wants to use ZOOM; and premium plans that need to be purchased. For church services, some church-hosted meetings, and the Lyceum, First Parish has purchased a ZOOM account as well as software that provides closed captioning. You may have used this at some time in the past year.

Access for ALL was asked to see if other ZOOM meetings – such as ZOOM meetings that a parishioner sets up to talk with a few other people - could also have closed captions, so that it could be more accessible to those attending the meeting. That’s a great idea but is (at least currently) not available through the free Basic Zoom, which is what most of you at home are using.

Access for ALL will continue to monitor this, and when/if ZOOM basic changes, we’ll let you all know.

*Lee Vorderer*

## February Event!

Join Rev. Annie and Lisa Maria for a cathartic event for letting out our feelings! It's been a long winter with many challenges personal, pandemic related and political. Come to the common on Sunday February 13th at 2 pm for smashing of old broken dishware and maybe some group yelling. We'll have tarps down for shards and will provide some things to break; feel free to bring your own as well! RSVP's are encouraged at [tinyurl.com/FPBfeelings](https://tinyurl.com/FPBfeelings). People of all ages are welcome, including community members.

## Ferry Beach Retreat Update

I’m sorry to have to announce that we will once again NOT be having our traditional Mother’s Day weekend retreat at Ferry Beach this year. The pandemic situation is just too volatile, and early May is coming up too fast. I have spoken with Ferry Beach, and they are holding the same weekend in 2023 for us. If things have settled by then, we will likely be sharing our space with the Keene NH UU church again.

*Carla Bradford*



## Valentine Concert Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>: Save the date!



On Sunday February 13th at 4:00pm the Music Committee will host this year's annual Valentine concert, "Love Songs We Love", featuring our own vocalists Cynthia Mork and Ben Sears, with Brad Conner on piano and cellist Nathan Kimball. The concert will be presented via Zoom, with the possibility of limited in-person attendance if circumstances allow. Stay tuned for updates!

Get in the mood for love with popular favorites like "Isn't it Romantic", "People Will Say We're In Love", "True Love", "I Remember It Well" and many more! For an added touch of romance in a classical vein, cellist Nathan Kimball will treat listeners to Massenet's emotional "Meditation" from the opera *Thaïs*, and Elgar's charming "Salut d'amour", originally composed as a gift for his bride-to-be.

As we did last year, there will be special Valentine goodie bags available for folks to pick up at the church that Sunday ahead the concert! (Watch for further details. Delivery can be arranged to those unable to get to the church.) In addition to homemade cookies and other Valentine treats, each goodie bag will include one raffle ticket for a special prize drawing during the concert. You must attend to be eligible to win!

Donations in any amount will be gratefully accepted electronically during the concert for the benefit of First Parish, or you may mail a check to First Parish with "Valentine concert" in the subject line. Your support will be most appreciated!

Don't miss this wonderful Valentine afternoon of love songs and romance!

Bea Brunkhorst - Music Committee Chair