



# The Parishioner

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

*Spirit...Justice...Community*

Volume 55, Issue 8

April 2022

**Rev. Wendy Bell**, interim senior 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\***

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

**April 3rd**

Title: “Awake to it All” - Rev. Annie

Our abilities to wake up to the horrors of the world and the wonder of the world are deeply linked. In a society where it is very easy to stay distracted, how can we cultivate staying awake to miracles as well as to injustices that are woven through our lives?

**April 10th**

Title: “Awakening to This Very Moment” – Rev. Wendy

Once upon a time, the Buddha was asked if he was a god. “No,” he replied, “I am simply awake.” This morning, using a Buddhist lens, we reflect on THIS MOMENT in our individual and collective lives.

**Friday, April 15th – 7PM**

Title: “Tenebrae/Good Friday” – Rev. Annie

Led by our Rev. Annie, Brad Conner and our Choir, this service is a night of stark beauty in the darkness. *Tenebrae* is Latin for *shadows* and this is a service of to sit with grief and pain as we tell the story of Jesus’ crucifixion through Bible passages. Please bring a stone with you for a ritual of laying down our sorrows (we will also provide stones).

**April 17th – 9AM EASTER Service**

Title: “We Rise” – Rev. Wendy

Join us this Easter morning, as we take a new look at an old story, and imagine what it might mean for us today. Including favorite hymns, the music will reflect the story and mood of the service.

**April 17th – 11AM EASTER Service**

Title: “Through Love we Live” – Lisa Maria

Celebrate Easter at our Family Worship Service as we reflect on the message of Easter through the lens of the classic Beatrix Potter story of the Velveteen Rabbit, along with musical selections from our Youth Choirs, led by Janet Welby. Children 12 and under are invited to participate in an Egg Hunt on the Common after the conclusion of the worship service.

**April 24th**

*An Earth Day Service coordinated by First Parish Environmental Justice Committee.* The guest speaker for the Earth Day service will be Chief Caring Hands; she is the Chief of the Massachusetts Tribe. There will be opportunity for Question & Answer immediately following the service with tribal members Quiet Storm and Strong Bear Medicine.

**Next deadline is Apr. 24**

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 this, the sky is a crystal-clear blue, the color of lapis lazuli, the sun is bright and warm, the birds are singing, the trees are budding, and the daffodils are blooming! So many beautiful signs of spring!

But my very favorite sign of spring so far in 2022 was...our very first post-pandemic outdoor coffee hour! Yes, on March 20<sup>th</sup>, about 35 or so of us gathered in person on the Elm Street side of the church for coffee, tea and munchkins. People of all ages, eating, drinking, sitting, standing, climbing, running, conversing, and mostly exclaiming, “ISN’T IS GREAT TO BE HERE TOGETHER IN PERSON DRINKING HOT BEVERAGES AND SEEING EACH OTHER’S FACES?!?”

It truly was a grand sight, and it allowed for something so many of us been craving...a sense of renewed connection.

Easter is coming up in a couple of short weeks and, well, what a perfect day to celebrate the rebirth and renewal of connection and community at First Parish! And so I want to invite...no...encourage...no...URGE you to put that date on your calendar now and begin making plans to come in person, if you feel safe. Call a friend, make a date, offer a ride, pray for warmth and sunshine...and come join us!

Can’t wait to see you!

- Rev. Wendy



## Minister’s Musings

This year I attended a retreat on Ash Wednesday, the day that starts the season of Lent, the 40-day period before Easter in the Christian tradition. The theme of the retreat was “Prepare a Fast”, and fasting is one of the common practices of the Lenten season. You may have encountered this in your own upbringing, being told to give up meat or chocolate or something similar.

I’ve always been resistant to fasting as a spiritual practice. It can get so easily wrapped up in diet culture that reminds me too much of my adolescent eating disorder. Fortunately, the leader of the retreat had an expansive idea of fasting. On the retreat I had an impulsive idea that truly shocked my closest friends. What if I fasted from caffeine?

Now I’m a coffee addict who gets her first cup very first thing in the morning before doing anything, no matter what. But on this retreat, I felt that letting go of this drug I use to push through and be productive could be a good way to embrace humility and limitations. What I’ve learned so far is that life off of caffeine is easier. I can wake up and just move into my day. When I don’t get enough sleep, yes I’m tired, but I don’t have the high and crash, so my afternoons are so much smoother. I thought I would feel more sleepy, but if anything I feel more awake.

Awakening is our Soul Matters theme for April. As we move through this month, maybe there are practices and habits you can let go of too, to feel more awake to your life and to this world.

- Rev. Annie



## Musical Notes

*"Peace unto you when in prayer you're pleading, peace unto you when you cease to roam; peace unto you when in finally seeking peace, you find that you're finally home." (1999) – John Parker, lyricist*

Here is the music for services in the upcoming month (pandemic willing) –

**Sunday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>** (10 a.m.): Sandra LaBarge-Neumann will be playing organ. The adult choir will sing Gilbert Martin's "Peace Unto You".

**Sunday, April 10<sup>th</sup>** (10 a.m.): Sandra LaBarge-Neumann will be playing organ joined by Elizabeth Connors on clarinet. In honor of the upcoming Holy Week they will play an arrangement of Handel's "Ombra mai fu" and "When Jesus Wept" from *Five Old American Songs*, arranged by Sclater.

**Friday, April 15<sup>th</sup> "Tenebrae/Good Friday"** (7 p.m.): 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. To enhance the proceedings, the adult choir will sing excerpts from Handel's somber masterpiece "The Ways of Zion Do Mourn" with soloists Cynthia Mork, Carol Krusemark, Laura Kalb, Buffie Groves, Dean Groves and Larry Herz with accompaniment by a string quartet, two oboes and Sandra LaBarge-Neumann on organ.; the overture will be danced by Dorothy Anderson-Perales. "O sacred Head, now wounded" will also be sung. Combining tradition with a touch of unconventionality, this will be a service of shadows and deep reflection. Be sure to bring a stone with you.

**Sunday, April 17<sup>th</sup> "Easter"**: For both the 9 a.m and 11 a.m. services, Sandra LaBarge-Neumann will be playing organ and Steve Sussman will be playing piano. At the 9 a.m. service, the adult choir will sing Handel's "Let Their Celestial Concerts All Unite" and, in honor of Passover, they will sing Verdi's "Va pensiero", which has also become an anthem sung by Ukrainians in their struggle for survival. During the service we will also sing expected hymns for the day. Carol Epple – flute and Elizabeth Connors – clarinet will also be playing. At the 11 a.m. service, Janet Welby will be leading the First Parish youth choirs in joyous music appropriate to the celebratory mood.

**Sunday, April 24<sup>th</sup>** (10 a.m.): I will be playing piano and Dorothy Anderson-Perales will be dancing "Blue Boat Home" and other dances harmonized with the Environmental Justice theme of the service.

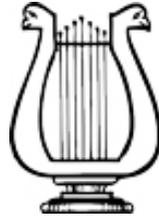
**Sunday, May 1<sup>st</sup> "Music Sunday"**: The theme of this service is "Joy". It will feature the adult and youth choirs as well as vocal soloists and a small orchestra. There will be music by J.S. Bach, Beethoven, Handel, Haydn, and Vivaldi, as well as the uplifting folk song, "Will the Circle Be Unbroken?"

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!** On **Saturday evening, April 9, 2022**, the Music Committee will host a concert featuring **The Oberlin Obertones**, an *a cappella* group featuring our very own Liam Oates. We are honored that they have included First Parish on their Album Release Spring Tour 2022. The event will be both in person and on Zoom and there will be a freewill offering taken during the concert to benefit First Parish. See more details elsewhere in this Parishioner with even more details coming as we get closer to the event!

Why not think about joining choir! If you're interested, e-mail me at [bconner@uubedford.org](mailto:bconner@uubedford.org) As you can see above, musical plans for the remainder of the church year feature various delights on Easter, Good Friday and Music Sunday 2022.

Bradford Conner, Music Director

## The Bedford Lyceum



**“Reflections on Jerusalem: A Century of Lost Opportunities” with Dr. Alice Rothchild**

**This presentation is dedicated to the Human Rights Work of Dave & Ginny Packer**

***SUNDAY, APRIL 3<sup>rd</sup> from 3pm – 4pm via Zoom***

**Dr. Rothchild will provide a personal exploration of the ancient city of Jerusalem, with a special focus on East Jerusalem and the surrounding areas of greater Jerusalem, which have experienced decades of "Judaization" and erasure of the Palestinian presence. What are the costs of these policies, not only to Palestinians, but also to Jewish Israelis? How is this a mirror of the ongoing occupation of Palestine? What can we learn and what can we do?**

Alice Rothchild is a physician, author, and filmmaker who, since 1997, has focused much of her interest on human rights and social justice surrounding the Israel/Palestine conflict. She practiced Obstetrics & Gynecology for almost 40 years and was Assistant Professor of Obstetrics & Gynecology, Harvard Medical School until 2014. Dr. Rothchild writes and lectures widely, is the author of *Broken Promises, Broken Dreams: Stories of Jewish and Palestinian Trauma and Resilience*; *On the Brink: Israel and Palestine on the Eve of the 2014 Gaza Invasion*; and *Condition Critical: Life and Death in Israel/Palestine*. She directed the award-winning documentary film, *Voices Across the Divide*. She is also on the board of the [We Are Not Numbers](#) program in Gaza and the [Gaza Mental Health Foundation](#), and on the steering committee of the [Jewish Voice for Peace Health Advisory Council](#).

**Zoom Link:**

<https://zoom.us/j/92041326029?pwd=TDJNUXhRWktoWmNlVjdBVGNnUFRYdz09>

Meeting ID: 920 4132 6029

Passcode: 456062

One tap mobile +19292056099,,92041326029#,,,,\*456062#

By phone +1 929 205 6099

**For further information, 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. \*\***

## Coming of Age News

Our next meeting is on Sunday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> from 3:00 to 4:30PM.

This is our regular CoA meeting, with the next one being the CoA retreat. We are still finalizing the timing of that (end of April/1<sup>st</sup> week of May).

Thank you.

Bob Doud

## Save-the-Date Invitation!

The Interim Ministry Transition and the Stewardship Teams invite you to...

### ALL CHURCH PARISH PICNIC

**Sunday, May 15**  
**11:00 AM - 3:00 PM**

**Town Common**  
**(Rain date - Sunday, May 22)**



A celebration of camaraderie, merriment, historical, musical and other delights!

## April Stewardship Update

As the weather improves and Covid rates drop, our return to in person activities is well underway. The church is illuminated in the blue and yellow of the Ukrainian flag, a sign of our ongoing commitment to peace and justice. Your ongoing financial support makes this possible. There are two months left in FY 21-22 to complete pledge payments. Checks can be mailed to First Parish Bedford 75 Great Road Bedford, MA 01730. Electronic donations can be made 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).

### eGiving Changes Coming

Our new church software, OneChurch, has an eGiving platform that is less expensive, easier for bookkeeping and for users than our current vendor, Vanco. Over the next few weeks information on the changeover and instructions on using OneChurch for eGiving will be published on ParishBiz.

-Vicki Gaw, Treasurer



## Board Matters

Spring is stirring. Along with flowers and birds, parishioners are emerging with more and more people attending church in person on Sunday. While there was some weather-related hesitation this morning, we are working towards a Community Hour outside, after the service, with coffee. This morning (3/27), all the pews were open, as were the windows. Recognizing that not everyone is prepared to be in the building, we will continue also having services on Zoom. We are also still limiting numbers, so please sign up.

In addition to bringing more of the church back into the building, task forces, committees, and staff are working on several different topics, and events.

- The Parsonage Task Force is looking into what options we have with regards to the building once John and Sue move out some time in early summer.
- The Stewardship Committee is building the campaign, and recruiting speakers to remind us what we value about our community, and of the need to support it.
- The Transition Team has shared some personal stories of memories and histories of First Parish.
- The Partner Church Committee is working towards fundraising to support Ukrainian Refugees through the Partner Church program.
- Sunday Morning volunteers and recruiters are starting to figure out how to support more of us in person. (Coffee and Ushering volunteers).
- OneChurch is getting some traction with staff and Stewardship.
- Our Treasurer and Finance Committees have been building our proposed budget for next year.
- We are looking to move away from our overly complicated credit card donation process, and to start using OneChurch for credit card transactions instead of Vanco.

So, please read emails that go out over ParishBiz that will provide more details on these topics as they become available.

I hope to see you in church next Sunday.

Jennifer McClain, Board President

## Stewardship Committee

It's that time of year!

As the First Parish community enjoys the advent of spring and the reopening of the Sanctuary, the Stewardship Committee is busily preparing for this year's Pledge Drive.

Soon you will receive information about the church's fiscal goal, with a request to show your love and support for First Parish by committing to a pledge.

The Stewardship Committee is also teaming up with the Transition Team to plan a celebratory event at the church in May!

Please be on the lookout for further information.

Gratefully,

Your Stewardship Team: Mike Boczenowski, Chris Gittins, Annie Gonzalez, Irene Gravina, Ron Green, and Webb Tilney

## Music Committee Event

**Come to Oberlin College's Obertones a capella group performance at First Parish, Saturday, April 9 at 7 PM!**

This event, sponsored by the First Parish Music Committee, gives our community a rare chance to hear this group locally in-person (and will also be livestreamed on Zoom). The Obertones – Oberlin's men's and non-binary *a cappella* group – will be concluding a tour of Washington D.C., Princeton NJ and Boston with this concert at First Parish. (First Parish's own Liam Oates, Oberlin '24, is a member.) Founded in 1984, the Obertones' mission is to deliver their signature sound to audiences far and wide in fun-filled performances overflowing with contagious energy. Ever a campus favorite at Oberlin and a fixture in northeast Ohio's Lorain County, the Obertones are also frequently on the road. Their quest to share their love of singing has taken them from coast to coast, south and north, from busking on the streets of New York, to major festival stages in Washington, DC, to a livestream of over 100,000 viewers, and everywhere in between. They have been featured on HBO's *Girls* and Netflix's *Bojack Horseman*.

If planning to attend in-person, please check First Parish's latest covid guidelines for updates. A free will offering to benefit First Parish will be taken during the performance both in-person and on Zoom. For a preview you can hear the group's virtual May 2021 concert here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITmXTSKXe5U>



**The Oberlin Obertones  
Spring Concert Tour 2022**

the oberlin obertones

back in bloom

**Album Release: Friday, April 1**  
Spotify, Apple Music, Bandcamp, iTunes, everywhere!

<b>The Lyceum, Alexandria, VA</b> Saturday, April 2nd, 8 pm	<b>Faneuil Hall, Boston, MA</b> Thursday, April 7th, 5-7 pm
<b>The Cherry Blossom Festival, DC</b> Sunday, April 3rd, 12 pm	<b>First Parish, Bedford, MA</b> Saturday, April 9th, 7 pm
<b>Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church Bethesda, MD</b> Sunday, April 3rd, 5 pm	<b>Album Release Party Oberlin, OH. The 'Sco</b> Date/Time TBA

## Braiding Sweetgrass Book Discussion

Join us in person or via zoom for the final Braiding Sweetgrass book discussion Sunday April 10 at 11:30 am. Whether or not you 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 participate in this one! The discussion questions will focus on the last section of the book, Section 5: Burning Sweetgrass, and will be sent out via email to the announcement email list closer to the event. The zoom link is noted on the church calendar and will be sent out to the announcement email list. For those joining in person, the discussion will be in the church Common Room or possibly outside if weather permits.

- Earth Connections Team

## Important Updates from the Re-opening Task Force Committee

It's been wonderful having people in the building this spring and coming back to practices like community hour! Members of the Re-Opening Task Force met Wednesday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, to discuss any changes we might need to our current guidelines. While we are still in the Orange (High) Transmission Level Category, as shown on the charts which are part of our Covid-19 Guidelines, infection occurrences have dropped recently and as the weather warms and more of us are spending time outdoors we hope that this trend will continue. The orange level still requires masking indoors in the church building, but we have decided to allow people to remove masks just for eating and drinking and to allow food and drink to be served in our smaller gatherings, minding the room capacity requirements.

Things are improving, and we hope that they will continue to do so in the months to come. Each of us must decide what is safe for ourselves, but for those comfortable in doing so, a return to personal attendance on Sunday morning service is encouraged. We have removed the barrier tapes so all pews will be available for seating in the Sanctuary, windows will be open to provide ventilation, and, weather permitting, coffee will be available outdoors. Everyone is also encouraged to review the updated guidelines by going to the church website and clicking on the heart shaped icon on the right labeled "Latest COVID Guidelines". It's been and remains a long road, but if we hang in there and continue to find ways to protect our health and gather together once again, we will reinvigorate and grow our fellowship.

Bob Batt on behalf of the committee.

## First Parish/St. Paul's Collaboration: Video Presentation

How can we bring accountability over the climate crisis? This inspiring story of youth activism documents 21 activists from across the nation as they file a groundbreaking lawsuit against the United States. The case reveals evidence that the government has endangered their constitutional rights to life, liberty, and property by acting over six decades to create the climate crisis. YOUTH v GOV, an award-winning film, shows the power of young people to lead. Our faiths call us to safeguard the Earth for future generations. Watch @youthvgovfilm with us at **St. Paul's Episcopal Church Bedford on Thursday April 28th at 6pm. RSVP to Green@StPaulsBedford.org. Masks required.**

Sponsored by FP's Environmental Justice Committee and St. Paul's Green Team.

## News from the Gallery@First Parish

Dear Friends,

The Gallery@First Parish team is planning to create a slide show for the Gallery site on the church website to showcase the creativity of our parishioners.

During the last two years many of you have found the space and time to enjoy making things. We would like you to share your inspirations! What did **YOU** make?

Did you get creative with food? With your home space? Your Garden? With chalk on the driveway, with window displays, sewing, quilting, knitting, making costumes, robots, inventions with art of any form?

Please inspire all of us with photos of your creative pursuits! Each of you may submit up to two photos along with titles/descriptions to Doris Smith at [dorsmith@mac.com](mailto:dorsmith@mac.com) by April 15th for inclusion in this virtual show "What I Made During the Pandemic".

Please contact us if you have any questions.

The Gallery Team:

Bob Batt  
Maria Green  
Marlene Meyers  
Kati Oates  
Doris Smith  
Chris Wojnar



## Women's Book Group News

Please join us on April 10 for a discussion of Maya Shanbhag Lang's book "What We Carry: A Memoir". There's a lot to think (and talk) about in this book which is about the relationship between a daughter and her mother:

From Google Books:

Maya Shanbhag Lang grew up idolizing her mother, an accomplished physician who immigrated to the United States from India and completed her residency all while raising her children. Maya's mother had always been a source of support-until Maya became a mother herself. Struggling to understand this abrupt change, Maya soon learns that her mother is living with Alzheimer's. Unable to remember or keep track of the stories she once told her daughter, Maya's mother divulges secrets about her past that force Maya to re-examine their relationship. Absorbing, moving, and raw, *What We Carry* is a memoir about mothers and daughters, lies and truths, receiving and giving care, and how we cannot grow up until we fully understand the people who raised us.

Since small group meetings are now happening at church we are thinking about (finally) going back to a Sunday evening pot luck format but this is not definite. There will be an e-mail sent to the anno list the week before the meeting to confirm a time and place. We'll also discuss where and when we'll have our annual book swap.

Please e-mail Margaret Jackson ([mjacksonfpb@yahoo.com](mailto:mjacksonfpb@yahoo.com)) with questions.

## News from the Parish Nose

This month the Parish Nose did not do a good job sniffing around, so apologies that submissions were not requested nor collected. Tune in next month to get more news from your First Parish community.

We do want to acknowledge the death of Merlin Schwartz, a member of First Parish and resident of Carleton Willard Village on February 21st. Mr. Swartz was a loving and devoted father and grandfather, a devoted professor, an avid and adventurous traveler, and was devoted to peace and justice for everyone.

We also want to congratulate our own Shawn Hanegan and Bea Brunkhorst, elected to the Select Board and Board of Health respectively in the town of Bedford. Thanks to all who put our fifth principle in action and voted!

We send love to all in our community who are celebrating, struggling or grieving. More next month!

