



# 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 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/>

### June 5<sup>th</sup>

Title: “Celebrating our Blessings” – Rev. Annie  
Join us for a multigenerational service honoring our graduating seniors, our faith development teachers and our beloved Youth Music Director Janet Welby. We'll share love and gratitude and celebrate our blessings.

### June 12<sup>th</sup>

Title: “The Blessings of Community” – Rev. Wendy  
During this final formal service of the church year, we will sing together and enjoy beautiful music together and celebrate the traditional end-of-the-year flower communion together! Come join us – in person or by Zoom!

**June 12<sup>th</sup> – ANNUAL MEETING / 12:00PM** (Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://zoom.us/j/95001164316?pwd=aE5JaUtjRnc5eVBKdnVmNW5zeGVadz09> )

### SUMMER SERVICES

Well, it's been another church year like none other. We keep having those, don't we? This summer will also be different from summers past at First Parish.

Here's where you come in! Are you interested in hosting a Sunday morning event on a summer Sunday? It could be an informal worship service, a workshop, a small group discussion, a social event or something else you dream up! You can run it fully on Zoom or in person at the church, outdoors or inside. Or if you're feeling bold, you can make it a DIY hybrid event; we just won't have our usual tech crew in place as we are giving them the summer off.

We are looking to fill the Sundays starting with July 10<sup>th</sup> - August 28<sup>th</sup>. If you have an idea and want to take a date, please let Rev. Annie know! Your ministers are here to support you in making it happen. You can do this with friends or with a committee or small group at First Parish or on your own. We hope this is an opportunity for people to get connected and get creative without it feeling like a heavy lift or an obligation.

**Next deadline is June 26<sup>th</sup>**

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”

My heart is broken, and I imagine yours is, too, by the news of the tragic mass shooting at the Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, by the 21 lives lost, and by the 17 mass shootings that have occurred in the United States since that awful day. Thoughts and prayers cannot bring back the lives of those who were lost. Thoughts and prayers cannot heal the bodies, minds or spirits of those who were wounded or of those whose loved ones were taken from them. Thoughts and prayers cannot protect any of us from future gun violence.

We need more than thoughts and prayers. We need each other. We need to come together. We need to yell and scream and plot and plan and protest and lobby for change. We need to come together as a religious community for strength. We need to come together to deepen our resolve and to amplify our voices. We need to come together to be reminded that we are not alone and we are not powerless. We are Unitarian Universalists. We side with Love. We need one another and the world needs us.

In the words of Rebecca Parker, we must “choose to bless the world.” And ultimately that choice, as she says,

...will draw you into community,  
The endeavor shared,  
The heritage passed on,  
The companionship of struggle,  
The importance of keeping faith,  
The life of ritual and praise,  
The comfort of human friendship,  
The company of earth  
The chorus of life welcoming you.

None of us alone can save the world.  
Together—that is another possibility waiting.

See you in church!

- Rev. Wendy



## Minister’s Musings

The Soul Matters theme for this month is Celebrating Blessings. And while this world remains a cruel and violent and unfair place full of hardship and challenges, full of burnout and disconnection, I am ready to celebrate.

While this year has been hard, full of COVID related pivots, missing John Gibbons and trying to learn new software, I have also found a number of blessings. There's been the blessing of creativity as we've changed services and faith development plans for COVID reasons. There's been the blessing of music as our choir began to sing in person again this church year and we had a real Music Sunday. Most of all there's been the blessing of persisting together, of knowing that while many of us are tired and struggling, we keep showing up for and with each other, making things happen from Zoom streaming to coffee to stewardship to picnics.

The blessings are there, shiny and sweet amidst all that is exhausting and frustrating and devastating. They don't make up for the hard parts, but they are gifts, and they are worth celebrating. They are what makes our community so worthwhile through thick and thin.

- Rev. Annie



## Musical Notes

“No one is alone. By holding hands we sing out loud and take the stand that we are proud to change the world through love somehow...”

– from “Safe Places of the Heart” (2016) by Ronald W. Cadmus, American poet & lyricist, United Methodist Minister, member of the Reformed Church in America.

Here is music information for the final two Sundays of this church year –

**Sunday, June 5<sup>th</sup>:** Steve Sussman will be playing piano. The youth choirs will sing “What a Wonderful World”. It will be the last time our youth will sing under the leadership of Dr. Janet Welby who will be leaving First Parish to pursue other paths in music education. We will celebrate Janet and her contributions during the service and at a post-service reception.

**Sunday, June 12<sup>th</sup>:** Sandra LaBarge Neumann will be playing organ. Steve Sussman will be playing piano to accompany the adult choir. The choir will sing Robert Cohen’s “Safe Places of the Heart” in honor of Pride month and a reprise of “Will the Circle Be Unbroken?” from Music Sunday. We will sing our traditional year-end anthem by Dean Groves, “Another Year”, as well as hymns including Jason Shelton’s “Life Calls Us On” and our traditional “The Sweet June Days”. Elizabeth Connors – clarinet will be joined by her protégé, Jean Junior, MD, and will play an arrangement of George Gershwin’s “Summertime” during Flower Communion.

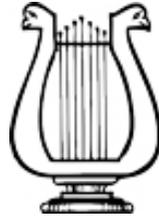
Before launching into summer, I would like to personally thank all the musicians who made this past unique year at First Parish a year of extraordinary music making during the continuing trials and tribulations of the pandemic. We are blessed to have a group of immensely talented, flexible and dedicated choir members and instrumentalists who continue to be part of the music program and generously share their talents with us. I bid a fond farewell (not a goodbye) to those choir members who are retiring from the choir or are moving away. I want to give special thanks to the members of the youth choirs as well as their parents, to Sandra LaBarge-Neumann, to Steve Sussman and to Bob & Fran Tyler for their highly professional and heartfelt contributions, and to all the other instrumentalists who came to fill our spaces with beautiful melodies. I’m sending a special thanks to the Music Committee for their continued work and devotion on behalf of First Parish and the music program. Finally, I have gratitude beyond measure for Janet Welby who has been our youth choir director for fifteen years and with whom I’ve had one of the most reciprocal musical relationships in my life. As she departs for new adventures, it’s an understatement to say we will miss her and we wish her well.

I also hope you’ll think about joining the adult choir because we’ve got terrific plans for 2022-2023 including music in the fall by the Beatles, J.S. Bach, Mendelssohn and others, wonderful music for Christmas Eve, and even more fantastic music by lots of favorite pop, folk and classical composers in spring 2023. Have a great summer!

Bradford Conner, Music Director



## The Bedford Lyceum

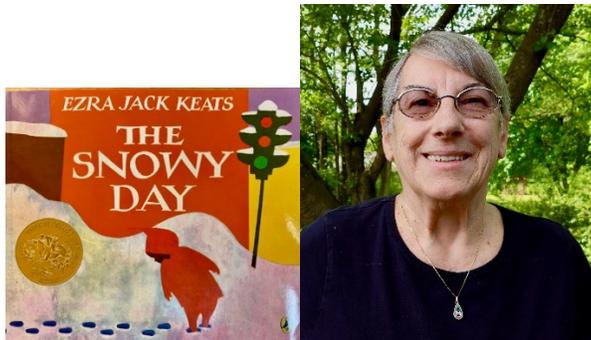


***The Bedford Lyceum is proud to present:***

**“Diversity and Race in Children's Picture Books” with *Doris Smith***  
**Sunday, June 5 from 3pm- 4pm via Zoom**

Doris Smith, former Elementary School Librarian for the Bedford Public Schools and past president of the Massachusetts School Library Association will introduce a few of the many children’s picture books available on this topic.

Even if you do not have a young person with which to share these titles, come, and learn about and enjoy these wonderful books for yourself!



In addition to having been an Elementary School Librarian in Bedford for over 30 years and served a term as the President of the Massachusetts School Library Association, Doris Smith has had many opportunities to study children’s literature during summers at Children’s Literature New England (CLNE) conferences in Canada, England, Ireland, and the United States. Author Greg McGuire was one of the founding members of CLNE. Doris has also traveled with the Nye Group - which features visits with authors, illustrators, librarians, and educators throughout Europe.

### **Zoom link:**

<https://zoom.us/j/93749043115?pwd=aVRFWjVyVIY5TW8rVi80cDhIU3BuQT09>

Meeting ID: 937 4904 3115

Passcode: 682807

One tap mobile +19292056099,,93749043115#,,,,\*682807#

Dial by phone +1 929 205 6099 US

**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. \*\****

## Faith Development

Next fall I'll begin my fifteenth year as a Unitarian Universalist religious education professional. Every year seems to zip along more quickly than the one before. I feel like the spring vanished under my feet faster than ever and here is the summer and a hiatus from routine Sunday church gathering. I'll miss all the families and the kids this summer and I look forward to sprucing up classrooms over the summer months and getting ready for hopefully a more normal (new new normal?) church year next fall. I know that flexing the church-going muscle can be tough when it is given time to atrophy. But even a short rest that can leave us feeling weakened, can be rehabbed back into strength.

I've heard many of you go to Star Island for All Star 2 in July, my hope is to come out to the island with my family for a day trip and see the smiling faces of Bedford's finest. And I invite you to mark your calendars for Sunday August 28th to come to an All Ages Backpack Blessing Worship Service (and if you aren't starting a school year, bring your briefcase, fall hiking pack, or world traveling suitcase to be blessed!).

It's been an honor to be welcomed so lovingly and heartily this year. We are a powerful community of care, and I'm delighted to be in ministry together with you. I couldn't ask for a better place to continue my call of service to our faith and to families who imagine a better world for their children.

- Lisa Maria

## Stewardship Update

As of May 31<sup>st</sup>, we have received \$393,230 in pledges, which is only 73% of the way toward our goal of \$535,000. With the annual meeting coming up on June 12, we don't have much time left to reach our goal. If you haven't pledged yet – or if you are able to make an extra contribution – please do it now:

<https://www.uubedford.org/submit-your-annual-pledge-to-first-parish/>

FY22-23 will be an important year for First Parish as we prepare to call a Senior Minister. Our financial health is an important factor in attracting the right person to fill that role. The fiscal year began June 1<sup>st</sup>. If you have not made a pledge for the coming year (FY22-23), please do so. Please pay any remaining balance on your 21-22 pledge. You can contact the office if you are unsure of your pledge balance.

We understand financial circumstances can change. If you will be unable to complete your pledge for 21-22, please notify the office. It helps with our financial planning to have this information.

## Social Responsibility Council End of Year Update

As a reminder, our final Share the Plate Sunday is June 5<sup>th</sup>. The recipient of ½ of that day's collection will go to The Nature Connection in Concord. We do not have totals for our Feb – May Share the Plate donations due to the ongoing transitions in financial bookkeeping in the office. We will update those numbers once totals are confirmed.

The Ukraine Refugee Relief Fund, which the SRC funded for \$2000, is now active and donations can be made through June 30<sup>th</sup>. Start thinking about organizations you might like to see funded through a grant or Share the Plate donation for next year. Application forms are available online.

This month we bid farewell to Maureen Richichi and Zach Crowley who are completing terms on the committee. Thank you, Maureen and Zach, for your contributions to the work of the SRC. We will welcome two new members after they are voted upon at the Annual Meeting this month.

## Women's Book Group June Meeting

The annual book swap will take place on June 12 at 6 p.m. at Corinne Doud's house (4 Redcoat Road in Bedford - screen porch). We'll have a potluck, exchange books and choose books for next year's meetings. Please bring a wrapped book (or two) to exchange (used, read, unread, new, etc.) and a dish to share. Please RSVP to Margaret Jackson if you're planning on coming so we know how many people to expect. If you can't make it but would like to suggest books for next year's meetings, please e-mail your list to Margaret.

Thank you!  
Margaret Jackson  
mjacksonfpb@yahoo.com



## Access for ALL

It's a long time since our committee worked on the closed captioning on Zoom, which seems to be going reasonably well. It's been mentioned that having captioning turned on when the ZOOM screen is at the left edge of the chancel in the sanctuary on Sundays gives some of us with hearing issues a chance to sit where we can see the captions, but there may be some hiccups along the way in getting that process to be a regular feature.

The UUA has decided to discontinue the AIM program. I heard from both Barbara Meyers, who has been leading the AIM work, and Shelley Rohe who is providing TA to teams, that the UUA is concerned the program has not attracted many congregations to do the work and very few congregations are certified, as we are. UUA sees the process as in need of re-consideration to ensure that UU congregations do all they can to counter ableism and include people with disabilities in valid ways in their work. There will be a formal announcement about this, probably at GA, and when I receive it, I'll pass it along to you all.

First Parish is getting ready to take important steps in calling its next minister. There is a transition team, and there will be a group identified to work on finding candidates for the congregation to consider. From Access for ALL's perspective it's essential that the next minister at FP be committed to inclusion and access in meaningful ways, and AFA hopes that everyone on the committee that's formed were committed to that kind of attitude.

While improving access and inclusion has been a long process, it has been a fruitful one for First Parish. Architectural improvements, better signage, more materials in large print, better hearing assistance, a disability-aware tech team, and to some degree a more accessible website are the results of our work together, along with many opportunities for the congregation and the kids in RE to hear stories and data about people with disabilities. We have all met many people inside and outside the congregation for whom disability plays a role in their lives. All this is thanks to all of us doing the work that was needed, and it has been a real pleasure to have opportunities to work with you all.

Sincerely, The Access for ALL team

## Small Group at Carleton Willard

Join Rev. Annie for a monthly small group for residents of Carleton Willard Village that has started again finally after a long COVID related hiatus. We'll meet on **Thursday June 16th at 1 pm** in the Bedford room and then take a break for summer, resuming in September on the 4th Thursday of the month.



## News from the Parish Nose

May has been quite a month at First Parish, with celebrations from Music Sunday to Coming of Age and the big church picnic!

We had some loss in the congregation this month, including the surprising death of Pat Pellegrini. Pat became a member of First Parish in 2009 and her husband Paul signed the book last year. (When Paul starred as a Mad Scientist at the FP Haunted House, Pat was a cheerful fellow volunteer!)

Pat loved history and was a member of the Bedford Historical Society. Holiday parties were always jolly when Pat was there! She laughed easily and often. Pat was also Secretary of the Friends of Job Lane – for many years the Board of Directors met at her house over pizza! She was a guide for the Open Houses, and because she had been a teacher, was especially adept at talking to children. She will be missed.

Craig Jackson fell on his bike on May 5th and broke his right wrist and left elbow. The update is that both were repaired by surgery on 5/18 and he is now waiting for things to heal.

Ben Bennett's father died this month, and we send our condolences to the whole Bennett family for their loss.

As we grieve with those who mourn, we also celebrate with those who are celebrating! We especially lift up Audrey Leida's senior art installation, a creative piece that came from a small art disaster that you can read about in the Bedford Citizen article on the K12 Art Show. Speaking of Audrey, we send our congratulations to all our graduating seniors, and we look forward to celebrating them in the service on June 5<sup>th</sup>. Here's to Sam Lincoln, Liv Evans, Audrey Leida and Nathan Linden! We also celebrate with our Youth Music Director Janet Welby who won the UMass Lowell Music Department Excellence in Teaching Award. We will miss Janet and we're proud of her.

Thanks to all who submitted an update for the Parish Nose! We appreciate you keeping our community connected.

-Rev. Annie Gonzalez

