



# The Parishioner

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

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

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**Rev. John E. Gibbons**, senior minister  
**Rev. Annie Gonzalez Milliken**, parish minister  
**Rev. William F. Schulz**, affiliate community minister  
**Deborah Weiner**, interim director of religious education  
**Sarah Klockowski**, youth coordinator  
**David Southard**, parish board president

**Carla Bradford**, editor  
**Bradford Conner**, music/choir director  
**Janet Welby**, youth choir director  
**Robert Noble**, organist  
**Joan Petros**, parish administrator  
**Katie Johnson**, administrative asst.  
**Joe Perriello**, sexton

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## Upcoming Sunday Services\*

\*All via Zoom - See [www.uubedford.org/worship/upcoming-services/](http://www.uubedford.org/worship/upcoming-services/)

### July 5 at 10AM: "Poems and Prose for the Summer"

Join Irene Gravina, Mike Akillian, Mark Bailey and Phil Vitiello as they share some of their own works and others that have moved their hearts – and souls – as we move into summer.

### July 12 at 10AM: "Mindfulness and Self Care"

Marge Heckman & Liz Connors will offer practices based in mindfulness for these times.

### July 19 at 10AM: "Here We Go Again" with Ron Cordes

Yet another re-run of this same vicious cycle that we've all seen too damned many times. Something unprecedentedly horrible happens and we get our hopes up and say "This time it will be different. This time things will certainly change." And, of course, a month later America's notorious short attention span has kicked in and we are back to the same old same old and my hopes are dashed. Yet, this time it truly looks like it might be different. Or is this just me being a cockeyed optimist?

### July 26 at 10AM: "Miracles as Acts of Faith and Power" with Dorothy Africa

Many people who consider themselves to be people of faith do not consider 'miracles' to be prominent features of their belief. To medieval Christians, however, they were vital proofs of the truth of the Christian faith, and its power to manifest itself in the life of a believer at any time. I will be considering two 'miracle' stories taken from the lives of two of the Irish saints I study that I think are of interest for their presentation of the conjunction of faith and power. Medieval Christians knew that miracles were by definition rare, but the desire for them was great, and hagiographers wrote with this very human desire in mind. I think these stories show an astute understanding of human nature, warts and all.



**Next deadline  
for submissions  
is August 19<sup>th</sup>**

***Sunday Zoom services will continue through August. Watch the website and ParishBiz Google Group for details. (If you are not subscribed to ParishBiz and would like to be, contact the church office.)***

The Parishioner is published monthly. Deadline is generally the last Sunday of each month. Send submissions to: [editors@uubedford.org](mailto:editors@uubedford.org). Church office is open weekdays 10AM – 4PM. PHONE: 781.275.7994 E-MAIL: [office@uubedford.org](mailto:office@uubedford.org) WEB: [www.uubedford.org](http://www.uubedford.org)



## BOARD MATTERS

At our Annual Meeting we take a retrospective viewpoint and recall all that has been accomplished over the past year. Certainly it has been a year of extraordinary challenges, and First Parish has risen to the task admirably. And yet, the 2020-21 church season promises to be even more extraordinary than the last. I want to take this moment to outline the priorities that we will face in the fall.

Responding to the needs of the congregation for the duration of the COVID-19 emergency will be an overarching priority, which necessitates monitoring a rapidly changing situation, planning for known contingencies, and reacting to unforeseen events. If and when public health authorities approve guidelines for safely reopening public meetings, and with congregational approval, we will implement procedures for reinstating in-person activities while complying with best practices under the “new normal.”

We will continue implementation of the religious education staffing plan with ongoing search, recruitment and hiring of a settled Director of Faith Development for Children. We are also envisioning a model for future administrative staffing and creating a staffing plan that will serve our growing congregation in future. In this work we are grateful for the support and assistance provided by the DFDC Search Team and the Administrative Staffing Task Force.

Planning for retirements in 2021 of our long-time and beloved staff, namely Senior Minister Rev. John Gibbons and Parish Administrator Joan Petros, will be an ongoing effort. We are coordinating with our denomination, the Unitarian Universalist Association, which provides guidance to congregations in transition. In this case, there is a well-established two-year process for calling a settled senior minister, beginning with an Interim Minister in the 2021–22 church year, who will help us through the transition. We will have a timeline and more details to share in the fall.

In the face of so many exceptional events, the Board represents your interests and concerns; please know that your candid comments are always welcome.

*Dave Southard, Parish Board*

## ***Another World is Possible - Two more workshops***

The uprisings for Black liberation and community safety have been changing our world in beautiful and disorienting ways. There are many ways to learn more, practice anti-racism and continue with or join the movement. As one small piece of this work, Annie is offering three workshops over the course of the summer to explore building a world of community safety and transformative justice. They will function as a series but you can also just come to one of them! So, if you missed the first one, you can still come to the second and third.

### Where are we now? Saturday July 18, 4 - 5:30 pm

We'll share our own feelings and experiences with police and learn more about the Black Lives Matter movement and its demands. We'll honor the rage that fuels this powerful movement and explore our own reactions to anger. This will be appropriate for junior and senior youth and adults.

### Where are we going? Saturday August 8, 4 - 5:30 pm

We'll share our experiences around punishments (punitive justice), trying to make things better when we mess up (restorative justice) and changing situations to make behavior better (transformative justice). We'll explore ways to practice transformative justice in our homes, institutions and towns. We'll look at ways to address the fear that can come up for some of us when we imagine a world without prisons or police. This will be appropriate for all elementary school children, youth and adults.

The zoom for both: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89800961246>

or call 929-205-6099 and enter Meeting ID: 898 0096 1246

or use one tap mobile: +19292056099,,89800961246#

## **Being with the Questions**

We are starting an experimental summer program of small group sessions that is an intersection of a vespers-style worship and a small group ministry. Our ministry team will share facilitation of our gatherings, to bring in different perspectives and areas of ministry and learning. We are going to be holding these sessions on Thursday evenings at 7:30pm. They will happen on July 2, 16 & 30, August 13 & 27, and Sep. 10. Anyone age 14 and older is invited to participate.

To sign up, if you haven't already, go to [tinyurl.com/beingquestions](https://tinyurl.com/beingquestions)

## **Help with Zoom**

Having trouble getting your Zoom to work properly? Struggling to get video or audio on that church meeting? Call the Tech Help Line at 781-214-1925. A parishioner will answer and try to talk you through your troubles. This is an experiment but we hope it will help make our online events a bit more accessible to all!

Thanks!!

~Annie

## “In Liminal Time” - Thoughts from Deborah Weiner, Developmental Director of Faith Development for Children

It's GA time. I'm writing this having just worshipped at Sunday's service, along with a reported 8,000 or so celebrants from around the world. I remember the first GA I ever attended. It was in Little Rock, AK in 1987, in a room with 1800 or so UUs. The Rev. Dr. Judith Walker Riggs preached the Service of the Living Tradition, and I thought hers sounded like the Voice of God. This year, we acknowledged her death and I thought back to that 'first' in my UU life. And this year, as we celebrated the third-largest GA ever (the largest was in Boston, MA and the second place goes to Portland, OR) and the first-ever online GA, I realized just what a different time this is.

At GA we're understanding – big time – the ways in which colonialism, the enslavement of black people in this country, the struggle for economic equity, black lives matter today, and our fight for the environment all connect. This perfect storm of disruption and insanity that we are living through, wrapped in the bubble of the Coronavirus that our country continues to be plagued with due to repeated missteps, is shaking us. Mercury is in retrograde. And it's now month FIVE in our seasons of isolation. Good glory!

And still...we keep moving forward. July 1 is the beginning of new things at First Parish. Good things. The first year of a new staffing/ministry structure, the first month of me serving for a year as Developmental Director of a new position – Director of Faith Development for Children. I'll be working along with Annie, as Minister of Faith Development, to imagine a real lifespan embrace of how we learn about, and live, our faith and our spiritual connections in the world. The final year of John Gibbons' ministry with this congregation. And the final year of Joan Petros' work as your Administrator – she has been the person who has shaped so much of this congregation's identity and focus!

What's ahead of us? We're not sure. We're planning for programming that is virtual, and hoping that it might be in-person, at least some of the time. We're still saying, on a regular basis, “Well, let's try this idea!” You'll see evidence of that this summer with a new faith exploration program for adults (more info elsewhere in this issue of *The Parishioner*) and talking with our colleagues, and with you, about what you need right now and what will support your journey in life at this time.

Do you have ideas, wishes, what-if experiments that might be worth trying out? Let a member of the team know and let's talk about it! In the meantime, during this summer, you'll find John, Annie, Brad or me with you at each Sunday worship service. We'll continue our Saturday get-together coffee meetings. We'll continue Story Time on Thursdays at 7:30 for the littler folk. We'll keep on gathering with parents to talk about life's triumphs and challenges every other Sunday at 7:30. Although many of us are dreaming of going away this summer, many of us will be here. Your ministry team will be taking some time off to re-charge our batteries, but there will always be at least one of us available to you. So don't be a stranger, don't be silent. Let's keep on movin' forward, together!

With love and care, *Deb*

## R.E. News – July 2020

Some of our programs will continue through the summer. Here's the schedule:

*Sundays, 10AM - Worship and community connection, all ages welcome*

*Sundays, 6:30PM (select dates) - Senior High Youth Group (60 to 90 mins.)*

*Sundays, 7:30PM - parent support group - bi-weekly (about 60 mins.)*

*Thursdays, 7:30PM - “Story Time” - a bedtime story with UU values (about 30 mins.)*

If you are interested in having your children join any of these gatherings, or if you want to connect and have not received login info, email Deb Weiner ([dre@uubedford.org](mailto:dre@uubedford.org)) or text Deb: 617-513-6614.

**Stay in touch! Subscribe to Parish Biz and RE news:** First Parish is disseminating most of the information about our online programs and other timely news via ParishBiz and (where news is RE-focused) the uubedford-re list. Both are googlegroups, and this is the best way for you to stay informed about what's going on! Please subscribe now. If you have questions please contact Parish Administrator Joan Petros who can guide you through the process: [office@uubedford.org](mailto:office@uubedford.org).

**Our 20-21 Faith Development Program Needs YOU, now:** There is much that is not known about the months that lie ahead, but one thing is clear: this congregation is planning to offer an engaging and inspiring Faith Development program for all ages. *We need YOU to make that happen.* Whether you are a parent or not, have kids at home or not, have ever taught or not...NOW is the time to say yes and get involved. **To help us plan for the fall, please complete the Teacher Interest Form:** <https://forms.gle/WqfMQVs1JdpemPkK8>

**It's also time to register children and youth for Faith Development Programs for the Fall!** Please visit the easy online registration form now: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1rXapi88cG5jwFyj5qPNEPP8vp9FAhHRV-CDGiVPwoyE/edit?usp=sharing>

**Do you play Dungeons and Dragons?** We're trying to start an online DandD group for members of our middle/high school cohorts. We need another adult or two to play with the youth. Can you help? Please email Deb Weiner: [dre@uubedford.org](mailto:dre@uubedford.org) and thanks!

## MUSIC NOTES

A simple musical quote suitable for summertime contemplation:

*“What is Music? How do you define it? Music is a calm moonlit night, the rustle of leaves in Summer. Music is the far off peal of bells at dusk! Music comes straight from the heart and talks only to the heart: it is Love! Music is the Sister of Poetry and her Mother is sorrow!”*

— Sergei Rachmaninoff, Russian composer, conductor and virtuoso (1873-1943)

*Brad Conner,  
Music Director*

### KidSing!

Just a reminder that we continue to have our KidSing gathering at 2:00 Mondays – Songs, games, and seeing each other!

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://uml.zoom.us/j/97837900760>

Meeting ID: 978 3790 0760

*Cheers, Janet*

### Covid-19 Testing Tuesdays

For the foreseeable future, there will be Covid-19 testing at First Parish every Tuesday. ALL are welcome regardless of town of residence, affiliation, symptomology, or ability to pay. Register on-line and you'll be given a timeslot and number: [Bedfordresearch.org/first-parish](http://Bedfordresearch.org/first-parish).

Nearly 400 people have been tested, of whom only 3 were positive...AND asymptomatic - exactly the reason for universal testing! This testing is a collaboration between a local lab, the Bedford Research Foundation and First Parish in accordance with Governor Baker's Task Force encouragement of universal testing.

Though the subsidized cost of the test is \$65 and a form is included with the results that may be submitted to insurance, First Parish also offers - thanks to generous donors - to subsidize anyone for whom cost is a barrier. Plus ALL Bedford Town employees can be tested without cost.

Please pass this info on to anyone else who might be interested!

If questions: [jgibbons@uubedford.org](mailto:jgibbons@uubedford.org)

### NEW Online Church Directory

The Membership Committee of First Parish in Bedford plans to create an online church directory that would be password protected for each church member who wishes to participate. Three First Parish member volunteers would oversee and administer the content of the directory available to our members, including the submission of photographs. The service we are considering is called “Instant Church Directory Online” and it can be viewed at:

<https://www.instantchurchdirectory.com/features/>

We had previously planned to have the company Life Touch take individual and family photos of our parishioners to create an updated photo directory. Life Touch had performed this service in the past, most recently in 2016. However, with the limitations on person-to-person contact due to the COVID-19 pandemic, those plans were put on hold.

In this time of social isolation, we believe that it is important that First Parish members be able to connect with each other through online mechanisms such as virtual “zoom” gatherings and other online venues. Our committee feels that an online church directory may provide parishioners with additional information about each other, including photos and contact information. Our ministers, John Gibbons Annie Gonzalez Milliken, agree with our decision to develop an online church directory. We have also sought input from others who have been involved in web-based technology for the church, such as Delsey Sherrill, Craig Jackson and Webb Tilney.

The Church Directory Online allows each member or friend of First Parish to create a login and password to securely access the directory. Our three directory administrators will input information about parishioners and then parishioners can provide updates, subject to approval by the administrators. For this coming church year, the three administrators are Nina Wampler, Mary Van der Mude and Webb Tilney.

The Instant Church Directory personnel will make sure the website and databases are up to date with the latest security software to protect against any security threats. To ensure the directories are safe, they only allow access to members who are entered in the directory. For more information about the security policies of Instant Church Directory Online see: <https://www.instantchurchdirectory.com/security/>. The cost of this online church directory is \$7.90 per month with a one-year contract. Funds to support this directory will come out of the Membership Committee budget.

Thank you for reviewing this information. We welcome any feedback from you about the directory and our attempts to give parishioners additional connections to each other. Parishioners will be given the opportunity to opt out of this online directory.

The Membership Committee:  
*Nina Wampler & Sarah Dorer, Co-Chairs,  
Marcia Morgan, Rich Suval, Ron Green,  
Mary Van der Mude, Webb Tilney*

### PICTORIAL



### CHURCH DIRECTORY





Sandy and Mike Boczenowski are over the moon on the birth of Flynn, their first grandchild, to son David and daughter-in-law Bridget. Congratulations to all!

## Welcome to Our Newest Members!

Welcome to our newest members, Nate Linden (who had to wait a few months because he jumped the gun by signing our Membership Book before his 16<sup>th</sup> birthday) and to our youth advisor Sarah Klockowski who has recently decided to become a UU minister. At its last meeting, our Board officially offered Sarah our Sponsorship. This is one of the requirements of UU ministers, meaning that they are engaged in the life of a UU congregation. Sarah too will lead a summer service.



## Ways to Stay in Touch

While the church building may be closed to in-person events, the church community remains OPEN and ACTIVE!

The best way to stay in communication and involved in all that is happening is to be sure you are subscribed to the First Parish Electronic lists ([www.uubedford.org/community-life/email-lists/](http://www.uubedford.org/community-life/email-lists/)) – especially the **ParishBiz** list. This Google Group sends out important messages from church staff and leadership. And for news for families with children and youth, we have the **uubedford-re** google group. If you are not subscribed, or need help in any way with subscribing to any of the lists, send an email to: [uubedford-it@googlegroups.com](mailto:uubedford-it@googlegroups.com).

The church website ([www.uubedford.org](http://www.uubedford.org)) is updated regularly and contains lots of useful information.

The **Main Calendar** of events on the website ([www.uubedford.org/main-calendar/](http://www.uubedford.org/main-calendar/)) is also being regularly updated with listings of all virtual events happening within the First Parish community.

All events, including Worship Services, are taking place via the Zoom ([www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us)) platform. If your committee or group would like to meet remotely, contact the church office ([office@uubedford.org](mailto:office@uubedford.org)) and Parish Administrator Joan Petros will be happy to set your meeting up.

Sunday's Zoom services are also available anytime on YouTube:

[Sunday Services on YouTube](#).

## News from the Parish Nose

In addition to all who attended the public events, our delegates to the annual UUA General Assembly were *Jerry Ross, Kath McCafferty, Carol Reynolds, Tony Van der Mude, Naomi Dogan-West, Maureen Richichi, Karen Frederick, Craig Jackson*, as well as *John, Annie, and Deb*. Despite (or because) it was all-virtual, it was one of the best-attended GA's ever! John saved a lot of money by hosting a virtual cocktail hour for our attendees. Our delegates will lead a lay service later this summer... Congratulations to *Marilou Barsam*, co-founder of Bedford Embraces Diversity, recently named a 2020 Commonwealth Heroine, following her nomination by State Rep. Ken Gordon... Former parishioner *Millie Seaborn*, now living at Sudbury Wingate, has recuperated from Covid-19... Former choir member *Allan Bittenson* has a recurrence of cancer... *Dee Russell* has initiated a trial cancer therapy and has a new CaringBridge site: <https://www.caringbridge.org/visit/deerussell2...> *Luanne Livesay* has learned the meaning of the word 'lithotripsy,' unfortunately... Did you see this appreciation of parishioner Craig Coldwell, acting chief of staff at the VA, in the Bedford Citizen: <https://www.thebedfordcitizen.org/2020/05/coping-with-the-coronavirus-at-bedfords-edith-nourse-rogers-memorial-veterans-hospital/>... Many of our parishioners have joined hundreds of others in the youth-led BLM protests on the Common following the murder of George Floyd... As parishioners and our community face difficult times, be sure to let our ministers know if you're aware of anyone in need of Stop & Shop gift cards, groceries, or a listening ear... —tpn



## Ways to Give...

Our new fiscal year started on June 1<sup>st</sup>. Here is a reminder of the ways you can make a pledge payment:

All checks should be made out to First Parish Bedford with the notation "Pledge Payment" in the memo line.

- Checks can be mailed to First Parish Bedford, 75 Great Road, Bedford, MA 01730.
- Some parishioners have a check automatically generated each month from their online banking system. This usually costs nothing and has the benefit of timely delivery to the church. Contact your bank.
- Credit or Debit cards can be used on the DONATE link on the First Parish website. Scroll down on the homepage of the website ([www.uubedford.org](http://www.uubedford.org)).
- Stock can be donated to the church. For information on how to do this, please contact Joan Petros, our church administrator, at [office@uubedford.org](mailto:office@uubedford.org)

