

Upcoming Services*

* All services via Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/936829478>

Meeting ID: 936 829 478

One tap mobile: +16468769923,,936829478#

By phone: +1 646 876 9923

Sunday, 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.

Sunday, August 2 at 10am:

“A Great Unveiling”

with Sarah Klockowski

The pandemic and the uprisings for Black liberation have exposed the truth about the inequities at the foundation of the world we have built. What is this historic moment for our nation unveiling about our collective values and systems, and how might the seriously misunderstood biblical text of Revelation speak to our current circumstances? Join Sarah Klockowski for a presentation on ancient apocalyptic texts and what connection they might have to the great unveiling happening in our time.

Sarah is thrilled to be a brand-new member of First Parish after having been the Youth Programs Coordinator for the past church year. She is a Ministerial Aspirant with the UUA and holds a graduate degree in Biblical Languages and an MDiv from Union Theological Seminary.

Sunday, August 9 at 10am:

“Never Again!”

The Peace and Justice Committee will lead a service observing the 75th anniversary of the 1945 atomic bombings of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, when over 200,000 people lost their lives. We will address some of the realities and myths of these tragic events, the enduring existential threat of nuclear weapons, and explore and how we as UU’s can answer the call of the Hibakusha, the atomic bomb survivors, “*Never Again!*”

Sunday, August 16 at 10am:

“The Suffragists Who Lived Next Door”

with Sharon McDonald

19th Century New England was an era of reformers. Even in a village as small as Bedford, determined activists rose to demand change. Join Town Historian Sharon McDonald as she tells the stories of several Bedford suffragists who would have been well known to First Parishioners 150 years ago.

Sunday, August 23 at 10am:

“The Power of Words, Conversation and Music”
with Carol Epple, Elizabeth Connors and Janet Welby

Carol and Liz will give a short presentation sharing the fun of collaboration through words, conversation and music. They will talk about the joy and spirituality of making music together through two pieces of music, “Blues” by English composer, John Rutter, and “Loons,” an original composition written for them by Janet Welby. Janet will join them as they present these wonderful musical examples to demonstrate how intimate communication among musicians can reach over and touch the congregation.

Sunday, August 30 at 10am:

“What Happened at GA?”
with First Parish in Bedford Delegates to our UUA General Assembly

Common Thoughts

In his memoir “Walking with the Wind,” John Lewis used a story from his childhood as a metaphor for the work of building a more just world:

“About fifteen of us children were outside my aunt Seneva’s house, playing in her dirt yard. The sky began clouding over, the wind started picking up, lightning flashed far off in the distance, and suddenly I wasn’t thinking about playing anymore; I was terrified...”

Aunt Seneva was the only adult around, and as the sky blackened and the wind grew stronger, she herded us all inside.

Her house was not the biggest place around, and it seemed even smaller with so many children squeezed inside. Small and surprisingly quiet. All of the shouting and laughter that had been going on earlier, outside, had stopped. The wind was howling now, and the house was starting to shake. We were scared. Even Aunt Seneva was scared.

And then it got worse. Now the house was beginning to sway. The wood plank flooring beneath us began to bend. And then, a corner of the room started lifting up.

I couldn’t believe what I was seeing. None of us could. This storm was actually pulling the house toward the sky. With us inside it.

That was when Aunt Seneva told us to clasp hands. Line up and hold hands, she said, and we did as we were told. Then she had us walk as a group toward the corner of the room that was rising. From the kitchen to the front of the house we walked, the wind screaming outside, sheets of rain beating on the tin roof. Then we walked back in the other direction, as another end of the house began to lift.

And so it went, back and forth, fifteen children walking with the wind, holding that trembling house down with the weight of our small bodies.

More than half a century has passed since that day, and it has struck me more than once over those many years that our society is not unlike the children in that house, rocked again and again by the winds of one storm or another, the walls around us seeming at times as if they might fly apart.

It seemed that way in the 1960s, at the height of the civil rights movement, when America itself felt as if it might burst at the seams—so much tension, so many storms. But the people of conscience never left the house. They never ran away. They stayed, they came together and they did the best they could, clasping hands and moving toward the corner of the house that was the weakest.

And then another corner would lift, and we would go there.

And eventually, inevitably, the storm would settle, and the house would still stand.

But we knew another storm would come, and we would have to do it all over again.

And we did.

And we still do, all of us. You and I.”

— *john*

Being With the Questions

In our new summer small group, “Being With the Questions,” we have considered “What is Enough?” and “Liminality: Living into Change.” Upcoming gatherings, where we will consider more 'big questions' of this time through meditation, music, silence and conversation, are at 7:30pm on July 30, August 13, August 27, and Sept. 10, facilitated by John, Annie, and Deb. If you are interested in joining this group, please contact Rev. Annie parishministeruubedford@gmail.com.

Another World is Possible Series

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, I'm offering three workshops over the course of the summer to explore building a world of community safety and transformative justice. Two already happened, but you can still come to the third one!

“Where are we going?” Saturday August 8th 4 - 5:30pm

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 link:

<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#

—*Annie Gonzalez Milliken*

Assistant Treasurer Anyone?

We need help! We need someone to back-up our treasurer, Vicki Gaw. Might you be interested, or can you suggest someone? Lots of support and appreciation provided!

The task list below is based on the arrangement Dee Russell and Maggie Debbie used from 2016-2018 with the understanding the details will be negotiable. One thought is a person with some prior financial background either professionally or in volunteer roles might find the position something they would feel comfortable doing.

Here's what the role entails:

- Sign Checks(weekly) – Treasurer primary, Assistant secondary
- Ensure monthly reports are produced and perform monthly review – Treasurer
- Work with administrator and bookkeeper – Treasurer and Assistant
- Attend Board meetings (monthly) – Treasurer
- Attend Leadership Team meetings (monthly) – Treasurer primary, Assistant secondary
- Attend Endowment meetings (quarterly) – Assistant primary, Treasurer secondary
- Lead Finance Committee meetings (quarterly) – Treasurer primary, Assistant secondary
- Budget Preparation (February through June) – Treasurer and Assistant
- Review of ongoing finances of the church, including trend analysis – Treasurer and Assistant

If you're interested, want to suggest someone, or want to know more, email treasurer Vicki Gaw at omigaw@comcast.net!

Faith Development Program Registration:

NOW is the time to register your children and youth for First Parish's Faith Development programs for 2020-2021. We're working to develop an interactive, creative program that will meet the safety and health guidelines of this time while engaging children and youth in fun programs that help build connection to our faith! Please take a moment now to register: <https://forms.gle/xrow9e4qjtjMW5DS9>
Thank you! For questions, contact Deb Weiner, Developmental Director - Faith Development for Children: dre@uubedford.org

Supporting our Children and Youth

From Rev. John Gibbons:

Folks...

Below, Deb Weiner appeals for your help with our programs for children and youth. I add: This is urgent. The very existence of our church community depends on our sustained commitment to multi-generational ministry. We fail if we let down our younger generation. We succeed when we demonstrate our willingness to connect the generations. All of us are limited in time and energy. This is a difficult time for ALL of us. Nonetheless, many or most of us can contribute in some small or large way. We are called to rise to this most challenging occasion. What we do *now* matters. May we look back and say, "With faith in the future, we did what we could." Truly, I implore that you respond to the volunteer interest survey at the link below. —*John*

Hi everyone,

I hope that you are finding ways to enjoy this socially distant summer and that you have some time for being outside in nature, where you can find space to breathe deeply.

I am writing to you to ask, with care and hope, whether could find time in your life to participate in supporting First Parish's children and youth through involvement in faith development programming this year. Before you toss this email, please let me share a bit more:

- This year will be different. Although we very much want to hold in-person gatherings, it is unlikely that they will be able to take place, at least for the first half of the church year. We seek people who will be willing to gather through other means with children and youth, for faith development programs that will be differently shaped but (we hope) meaningful and fulfilling.

- Are you thinking that you really need, and don't want to miss, worship? No worries. In a commitment to making sure that families have access to our programs even if they do not have multiple electronic devices in their homes, faith development programming will NOT conflict with Sunday morning worship. So you can be assured that all involved in faith development will also be able to gather for worship... including kids and teachers!

- Sharing the commitment: we know that we are experiencing these times as stressful and (for many) exhausting. We seek to offer a program that will give children and youth time to engage with one another, and offer you time to do other things - in other words, we want to work with facilitation teams to schedule your volunteer commitment in ways that also give you the breaks you need!

- Support: we will hold teacher/facilitator training and offer continuing support for your work. This is what we do together, not apart.

So we are asking, one more time: please, can you help us? We need grandparents, aunties and uncles, those who've never had kids and those who love them from afar as well as those who have them at home right now. Our program will be built around the number of volunteers who come forward and it really is true: without you, this cannot happen.

Please take a moment to contact me if you have questions, and please complete the volunteer interest form to let us know if you can help by going here:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1CVntBJ4uZrwtIAjEJ0SMvQ3ZJ1wsFhJ9B3cpB_tJHPI/edit?usp=sharing

With appreciation,
Deb

Upcoming Youth Events

Wednesday July 22nd - a viewing of the musical “Hamilton” by Lin-Manuel Miranda, starring the original Broadway cast! We'll have a check-in first, and then the show! 4:15 PM till 6:45 or so...bring a snack as you gather! The link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81342127093>

Wednesday August 5th - a viewing of “Just Mercy” Junior Youth Group jointly with Senior Youth Group - 3 - 6 pm. This powerful movie, based on the book by Bryan Stevenson, is an exploration of racism in our criminal justice system. It is a drama based on true events. You can watch the trailer here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GVQbeG5yW78>. The issues are heavy (racism, death penalty, threats of violence) so feel free to check in if you have questions or concerns. We would spend time debriefing after the film to share our reactions and what we can do to make our world more fair.
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88687536740>

Zoom Assistance

“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