



The Parishioner

News of the First Parish in Bedford

Unitarian Universalist

On the Common, Bedford, Massachusetts

Spirit...Justice...Community

Volume 55, Issue 2

October 2021

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
Rev. John Gibbons, minister emeritus

Jennifer McClain, parish board president
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

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Upcoming Sunday Services*

*If you can't join us outdoors, please join us via ZOOM. Link can be found at:
<https://www.uubedford.org/worship/upcoming-services/>

October 3rd

Title: What is Real Love?

"Love is the spirit of this church" we say each Sunday. But what does that really mean? Love as a spiritual practice in community is different from being nice or feeling fond. How can we practice courageous boundaried love here in this congregation and elsewhere in our lives?

October 10th

Title: All Flourishing is Mutual

Rev. Wendy will begin with a quote from Robin Wall Kimmerer's *Braiding Sweetgrass* and then reflect on indigenous wisdom, the wisdom of trees, and the wisdom of the deeply-rooted community of interconnected-us.

October 17th

Title: Free Listening!

This morning Rev. Wendy reflects on the power of deep listening to help mend human hearts, communities, and maybe even the social fabric.

October 24th

Title: Relationships are for Everyone!

A multigenerational worship for folks of all ages focused on how we build meaningful relationships together.

October 31st TBD

Next deadline is Oct. 24

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

“In the Interim”

Wow! What a month we’ve had!

In September, there were so many transitions, that it feels like we’ve had hardly a chance to catch our collective breath! Many thanks to all of those who have continued to pitch in with staff hiring and orientation, with OneChurch training, with bookkeeping and finance-related changes, with the rollout of Faith Development programming, with Re-Opening Guidelines, and with Sunday morning logistics (Mics, and Cameras, and Zoom! Oh my!) – and chair-carrying!

I’m honestly not even sure that’s the half of it. It’s a lot! And I have so appreciated your patience, your grace, your adaptability, and your “can do” attitude! Together, we will get through this!

During this month of October, I want to get to know more of you! And so, I am planning the following opportunities for you to “drop-in” via Zoom to meet me, to ask me questions, and to have some light, informal, getting-to-know-you conversations. Please join me on any of the following dates/times:

- *Thursday, October 7th at 11:00am
- *Wednesday, October 13th at 3:00pm
- *Tuesday, October 19th at 7:00pm
- *Saturday, October 23rd at 10:30am

Zoom links will be sent out the day of the event. I look forward to seeing you!

- Rev. Wendy



Minister’s Musings

What a whirlwind! September is often a chaotic time, but this year it is even more so. Sending my kid to in person school for the first time during a pandemic while navigating her living 50% with me and 50% with her dad is one thing. Then starting up the church year with 3 new major staff and 2 new more part time staff, during an ongoing pandemic as we create new COVID protocols...well that's another thing too.

So perhaps it isn't surprising that my column for the Parishioner was started about 10 minutes after the Sunday noon deadline on the 26th. But an unexpected perk of my late beginning is that I can include some notes from today's sermon which were requested by a couple folks who wished they were jotting down the practices for Bird Hope and Rat Hope. Feeling confused about what Bird and Rat Hope are? Go check out the YouTube from the Sept 26th worship!

So, for Rat Hope you get clear on your goals and leave the rest, you embrace failures and you find communities that persist. For Bird Hope you allow yourself to be vulnerable, you celebrate the wins even when they are partial or relative, and you find communities that uplift. That's it! Much easier said than done, but when done consistently these practices give us what we need to make it through the hardest times and to find inspiration to carry on.

Where's the Parish Nose??

As our community shifts away from the "well John Gibbons just knows what's going on" model and as our Lay Pastoral Care Team does some discernment work on our mission, the Parish Nose is taking a break. If you have ideas on the best ways to consensually communicate the happenings in and around our community, please reach out and let me know! ministerfaithdev@uubedford.org or 309-310-2341.

-Rev. Annie



News from the Parish Board

It has been lovely to see so many fellow parishioners at our outdoor services these last few Sundays. Hopefully the good weather will last and we will continue to be able to meet in person.

While we can't have the hustle and bustle of making coffee in the kitchen, or the smiles of greeting as we hand out orders of service, there are still tasks to be done together. We need chair-setter-uppers, and offering-collectors for those meeting in person. We need Zoom hosts for those who are joining in remotely. These are small opportunities to support and build our community and I hope you will take advantage of them. Please follow this link to sign up to help in person on one or more Sundays in October: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a0e44afad22a57-outdoor> If you are interested in becoming a Zoom host, please reach out to Annie and she can point you in the right direction.

As we embark on this interim period, we need to get back into the practice of sharing the load. While it may seem that taking on yet another task is depleting, doing it with each other can actually be rejuvenating.

I look forward to seeing you, chair in hand.

- Jennifer McClain, Parish Board President

Faith Development for Children – From Lisa Maria

The Church year has officially started, I'm meeting more and more people, and learning more about First Parish in Bedford every day. Attending Bedford Day was a wonderful way to meet people, and after two gatherings of Junior Youth Group I'm so happy to be working in-person with curious, energetic, fun youth again after 18 months of not enjoying that experience. Sunday morning Faith Development programming has had a slower start, but we are almost fully staffed up with volunteers for our age-grouped classes to start on October 3rd. We still need a couple more teachers, so if you have about one Sunday a month to give of your time to support our young people- please reach out to me ASAP!

The Faith Development Committee and Rev. Annie and I listened to feedback about the timing of Faith Development on Sunday mornings, and we are moving back to an earlier time, starting around 10:15 and ending at 11:15, similar to how programming was timed pre-pandemic. There may be some logistical hiccups as we live into this on Sundays that are ok weather-wise for programming to happen in person under tents, but not ok for outside worship. So, I will thank you now for your continued patience and grace as together we navigate the vagaries of Massachusetts weather and the shifting realities of the pandemic.

Many Thanks for Tent Contributions!

The Faith Development Committee, Rev. Annie, and Lisa Maria would like to extend a huge thank you to those who made it possible for us to have tents so that we can do Faith Development Programming outside even if it is a little rainy. Thank you to Bob Bass' friend who donated a tent, and to Heather Black and Mark Bailey for organizing the collection of funds and the acquisition of two additional tents. And thanks to Don Marshall for the loan of his tent. Thank you all for supporting our children and youth's safety and community engagement! Also, thanks to Erin Campbell, Carla Bradford, Vanessa Leida, Renae Nichols, Joan Turnberg, Jaclyn Olsen, Christie Martin, Holly Munsie, Dorothy Africa, & Carlough Faulkner-Carroll.

Musical Notes

“Drifting here with my ship’s companions, all we kindred pilgrim souls, making our way by the lights of the heavens in our beautiful blue boat home” – excerpt of lyrics from “Blue Boat Home” (2002) by Peter Mayer (b. 1963)

Here’s the planned music for upcoming 10 a.m. services (subject to change based on circumstances) –

Sunday, October 3rd: I’ll be playing piano. The adult choir will sing two fun and uplifting pieces by John Lennon and Sir Paul McCartney (aka “The Beatles”). The first is a lively “Ticket to Ride” Medley featuring the title song, “Penny Lane” and “Drive My Car”. The second is a beautiful arrangement of Lennon’s ever-relevant and thoughtful “Imagine” featuring Cynthia Mork as soloist.

Sunday, October 10th: Sandra LaBarge-Neumann will be playing organ.

Sunday, October 17th: Steve Sussman will be playing piano and Sandra LaBarge-Neumann will be playing organ. The adult choir will sing an arrangement of the beloved song, “Blue Boat Home”.

Sunday, October 24th: Steve Sussman will be playing piano. The youth choirs, led by their ever dynamic director, Janet Welby, will make their first appearance of the 2021-2022 church year. This is our chance to nurture our youth during a difficult time. Whether inside or outside, come and be supportive.

Sunday, October 31st: Steve Sussman will be playing piano. The musical theme for the morning is rainbows. The adult choir will sing a new anthem by Robert Cohen and Ronald Cadmus called “Safe Places of the Heart”. They will also sing “Over the Rainbow”, a favorite song by Harold Arlen and Yip Harburg, as well as another favorite song, “The Rainbow Connection”, with a special accompaniment by Peter Miller, banjo.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! After the morning service on **Sunday, October 17th**, Sandra LaBarge-Neumann will be giving a short “Welcome to First Parish” concert. The plan for now is to have the performance in the sanctuary (where else could we have an organ concert?). We will be following First Parish COVID protocols for those able to attend the program in person and we are also hoping to broadcast the program on Zoom for those who prefer to stay at home. More information will be posted closer to the date.

Isn’t it time to think about joining the adult choir? If you’re interested, e-mail me at bconner@uubedford.org Plans for the coming year include a Christmas Eve service filled with music around the theme of bells and Music Sunday 2022 (May 1, 2022) will be a Sunday of joyful music by favorite composers Handel, Haydn, Bach, Beethoven and a host of others.

Bradford Conner, Music Director

The Lyceum is back!

The Bedford Lyceum

Sunday, November 7, 2021 from 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Calling all SETI and astronomy enthusiasts!

Alan MacRobert, editor of *Sky & Telescope* magazine, will be speaking about "Life in the universe: So where are they?" on Sunday, November 7th from 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm via Zoom. Please join us for this intriguing presentation.

Alan MacRobert has been covering the SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) beat for decades. The searches are better than ever. Planets are abundant. Life seems to start quickly. So why haven't we found ETs yet -- and more pressingly, why haven't they found us? A life-covered Earth has been sitting in plain view for the galaxy for at least 400 million years. Alan will brief us on the state of the debate today.

Alan has been an editor for *Sky & Telescope* magazine in Cambridge since 1982. Alan's specialties at Sky & Telescope magazine include astronomical research news and articles about upcoming celestial events for amateur astronomers. Alan has also been a science correspondent for the *Boston Globe* where he wrote their monthly "Sky Watch" column.

*** First Parish in Bedford is proud to present this talk as part of its free, monthly forums (lyceums) on a wide range of topics. All talks are free and open to the public. Registration is not required. ***

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82036799516?pwd=cE04Q0RZK0lwUGp3MDJCeHhzeWJuUT09>

Meeting ID: 820 3679 9516

Passcode: 247480

One tap mobile +16465588656,,82036799516#,,,,*247480#

By phone +1 646 558 8656

Questions? Please contact Ellen Scheiner at mountainbreeze52@gmail.com

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. All committee chairs or their representatives should attend. We are looking for a date in November that works for most. Please register your schedule preferences at: <https://doodle.com/poll/75w98nrz755udwph> and we will follow up with the best available firm date. Thanks!

David Southard, Parish Council Chair, <southard@computer.org>

One Church Software Update

Over the next few months, we will be transitioning more functions to our new church management system, called OneChurch. One area of progress coming soon is online giving. Our current service provider is discontinuing support for the GivePlus mobile app. The app and the donation links on our website will continue to work for the time being; however we'll also be phasing in the OneChurch e-giving module. The advantage with OneChurch is that you'll be able to track your pledge and other contributions at any time, it puts you in control, and it integrates with our church accounting system. If you previously scheduled a recurring payment, we'll work with you to ensure your contributions carry over under the new system. If you have any questions, please contact David Southard <southard@computer.org>.

Stewardship Update

Under the leadership of our returning and new staff and volunteers, hybrid worship, RE, choirs, youth groups and other fall programs are well underway. Our building is being used again in keeping with our evolving Covid policies. Pledge payments and donations are always needed to support these programs. Pledges or donations can be paid in any amount at any time. You can make a pledge payment or a donation by sending a check by mail to First Parish Bedford 75 Great Road Bedford, MA 01730, donate electronically 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).

In the future, our bookkeeping will be transitioning from Genevieve Jones, who is retiring, to Brenda, our Office Manager. You will receive updates as the transition is underway. I'm asking, in advance, for your patience as the workflow is redesigned to streamline the process and align it with OneChurch, our new integrated management software. I always welcome any finance related questions or concerns you may have. Thank you.

Vicki Gaw, Treasurer

Women's Book Group October and November Meetings

We've decided to switch the order of the books we are discussing for the first two meetings. On Sunday, October 3 we'll discuss "Braiding Sweetgrass" by Robin Wall Kimmerer. The November book will be "Caste" by Isabel Wilkerson. The meeting date is November 14.

Details for the October 3 meeting:

This will be potluck (please bring a dish to share) at the Doud home, 4 Redcoat Road Bedford in the screened in porch (please enter around the back of the house). It will take place from 6 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. **Please RSVP** so we know how many to expect and can plan social distancing accordingly.

The November 14 meeting will most likely happen over Zoom. Details will be shared in the November Parishioner and the Anno list.

Congregation Meetings (Oct 17 & 20) to discuss Divestment Resolution

We encourage you to join one of the upcoming congregational meetings **in support of divestment of our church endowment from fossil fuels** on either:

1. Sunday, Oct 17, immediately following the service (in person and by zoom), or
2. Wednesday, Oct 20th, 7:30-8:30pm (zoom only)

Last May we held two congregational discussions regarding this draft resolution, and in June the Endowment Fund Committee changed their policy to eliminate from the portfolio any mutual fund or exchange-traded fund which holds any incidental fossil fuel company positions (except in the case of funds that hold fossil fuel company investments as part of their stated strategy to be activist investors).

Global warming due to emissions of greenhouse gases is a critical and time-sensitive issue. The purpose of this resolution is to foster transparency, perpetuity, and to actively engage in the divestment movement to support our values. As good stewards of our resources, we want to invest in alignment with our UU faith and values.

The Environmental Justice Committee, Peace & Justice Committee, and Endowment Funds Committee have been meeting to discuss/update this draft resolution. The link to the resolution will be sent to the parish by email prior to the congregational meetings, as well as the Zoom link for those meetings (or contact church office for the links). The plan is to finalize the resolution to put on the warrant for an upcoming parish meeting for congregational vote. Thank you.

- Corinne Doud

Wheel of Life

Great News from the Woskovs!

Paul and Connie Woskov recently visited their new grandson, James, in Seattle. James' parents are Stephen and Joanne Woskov.

Four Part Discussion Series on Israel - Palestine

The Islamic Council of New England [ICNE] and the Boston Workers Circle: Center for Jewish Culture & Social Justice announce an important discussion series entitled: '***A Better Future for Israelis and Palestinians - Affirming the Sacredness of All Human Life.***' This four-part series starts this fall and will provide opportunities to consider a range of perspectives from distinguished speakers, both religious and secular, that illuminate the current situation in Israel and Palestine. They will air on

October 6, October 13, October 27, and November 10.

All sessions are on Zoom starting at 7:30-9:00pm. For more details, speaker biographies, and to register for this free webinar, log onto Boston Workers Circle - <https://circleboston.org/better-future>. For questions - contact: discussions@islamiccouncilne.org

Brown Pulliam for the Peace & Justice Committee

Peace & Justice: Cha' Cha' Cha' Changes!

The Peace & Justice Committee's mission is to study, educate, and act upon social justice and peace issues pertinent to our UU values. We also promote the social justice campaigns of both the UUSC and the UUA.

Fifteen years ago we initiated a monthly Film Series, as an educational/action tool to promote a deeper understanding of the justice issues of the day. Film screenings and discussions were limited to Zoom sessions by COVID for the past 18 months. This Church year we hope to bring back some virtual in-person film series, with the hope of returning to in church screening sometime soon.

Last year we worked on 7 campaigns: Racial Justice, Voter Suppression, Immigration Justice, Peace & Nuclear Disarmament, Gun Violence, Justice in the Middle East, Economic Justice, and Criminal Justice Reform. These are all critical issues that demand our attention.

Given that we are a small group, we have decided to down-size, and focus our energies this year on three campaigns: Racial Justice, Peace & Disarmament, and Voter Suppression. We are spread too thin to take on other issues.

If you and others feel it important to address the many other justice issues, we welcome your energy. Our committee has a budget and can provide resources to help you create a successful campaign.

Contact Joe Pompei for information (joepompei@comcast.net)

Social Responsibility Council – We Need Your Input!

First Parish has always held social action to be one of its most important values. For those who are new and may not be aware, social action programming is coordinated by the Social Responsibility Council, which was funded by a vote at a Parish Meeting in October, 2001. Funding comes to the Council through First Parish's endowment. The goal of the Council is to act on behalf of the parish to coordinate and fund projects that express Unitarian Universalist values within our community. Starting with the 2018-2019 Church year, the Council also accepted responsibility for determining recipients for half of the first Sunday offering as part of the "Share the Plate" program.

As we begin this new church year, we invite all parishioners to think about social outreach projects of education and awareness, service, and social action that you might like to propose for grant funding this year, as well as proposals for our monthly "Share the Plate" collection. 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.

For "Share the Plate" proposals, 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. Since we have not yet received any proposals for this year, the committee voted unanimously to award funds from the October 3rd first Sunday to the International Institute of New England in Lowell to assist as they prepare to help in the resettlement of Afghan refugees who will be arriving over the coming months.

Any comments or questions can be directed to Marge Heckman, SRC chair, at maheckman@gmail.com.

Earth Connections Team

Oct 24 Edible Nature Walk in Lexington

Join us for an Edible Nature walk, part of our Earth Connections program this year, as we connect more deeply with the earth (a free event and a small donation would gratefully be accepted at the event):

Sunday, October 24, 1-3 pm Edible Nature Walk in Lexington

Edible Nature Walk at Lincoln Park in Lexington with naturalist Russ Cohen - this walk is geared for participants age 10 and over, no dogs please, and we encourage you to RSVP as soon as possible as there is a cap on how many can attend:

RSVP link for Edible Nature Walk:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSffwP7blvyQ31D4Tzng1aIOTeZ5LNAHxJ5pFCfkDWsLHJpJlw/viewform>
or <https://tinyurl.com/EarthConnect2>

Bedford, Lexington and surrounding communities are home to over 100 species of edible wild plants, many of which are more nutritious and/or flavorful than their cultivated counterparts. Join Russ Cohen, wild edibles enthusiast and author of [*Wild Plants I Have Known...and Eaten*](#), on a two-hour ramble through Lincoln Park in Lexington to learn about over a dozen species of edible wild plants. Keys to the identification of each species will be provided, along with info on edible portion(s), season(s) of availability and preparation methods, as well as guidelines for safe and environmentally-responsible foraging. Russ will bring along samples of goodies made from wild ingredients for folks to nibble and sip on. Last but not least, Russ will talk about the walk and the plants encountered in the context of the relationship and reciprocity themes of [*Braiding Sweetgrass*](#), as well as what he is doing to propagate and plant edible native species.

More details such as where to park/meet at Lincoln Park, Lexington, will be sent to those who rsvp. Due to Covid social distancing, we are not encouraging carpooling at this time. Thank you.

Personnel Committee

Please join me in welcoming Stacey Katz, our new Assistant Parish Administrator!

Stacey is a First Parish member and a former New Jersey native who loves living in Bedford. She only wishes that the ocean was a bit warmer! After many years teaching science in public schools and at the American Museum of Natural History, she took a break to care for her two kids and her mother-in-law, who suffered from dementia. Both of her children, Devin and Nina, now attend the Lane School. Stacey enjoys traveling...among her more memorable trips: the one where she met her husband's family in India; another where she visited the former Soviet Union just after the coup; and her all-time favorite trip where she snorkeled with sea turtles in a vibrant and healthy coral reef (she also learned that crying tears of joy while wearing swimming goggles don't mix well!).

Stacey feels passionate about working for good causes, like teaching and supporting the goals of First Parish. She joined First Parish because she was inspired after meeting so many FP'ers who were not only thoughtful, but also actively involved in community-building here in Bedford. If you see her in the office, she'll gladly take recommendations for local hikes, chat about evolutionary biology and snorkeling, and will share the many ways to ride the waves at the Jersey shore!

Since last spring Stacey has been volunteering with our Treasurer, Vicki Gaw. She'll now be working 20 hours a week, assisting Parish Administrator Brenda Rybicki! Welcome Stacey!

- Laurie Groves, for the Personnel Committee