



# The Parishioner

News of the First Parish in Bedford

Unitarian Universalist

On the Common, Bedford, Massachusetts

*Spirit...Justice...Community*

Volume 57, Issue 1

September 2023

**Rev. Jamie Hinson-Rieger**, senior minister  
**Rev. Annie Gonzalez**, minister of faith development  
**Lisa Maria Andreoli Steinberg**, director of faith development for children  
**Sarah Dorer**, parish board president  
**Rev. John Gibbons**, minister emeritus

**Carla Bradford**, editor  
**Bradford Conner**, music/choir director  
**Natan Wythe**, youth choir director  
**Sandra LaBarge-Neumann**, organist  
**Brenda Rybicki**, parish administrator  
**Stacey Katz**, assistant parish administrator  
**John Cooney**, bookkeeper  
**TBD**, sexton/custodian

Inside this issue:

A Note from Jamie	2
Minister's Musings	3
Office Matters	3
News from the Parish Board	4
Treasurer's Update	4
Parish Nose	5
Page Room Reminder	5
Youth Happenings	6
Faith Development	6
Access for ALL	7
Musical Notes	8
Music Committee Events	9
New Photo Directory	9
Social Justice Library	9
Women's Book Group	10
Plant Fair Update	10
FP Short Story Group	10
Stop Private Jets Expansion	11
Caring Coordinator Role	11
Gallery @First Parish	12
New Programming	12
Interested in Volunteering	12
We Need You!	13
Arts Playshop	13

**Upcoming Sunday Services\***

\*To join us via ZOOM, the link can be found at:

<https://www.uubedford.org/worship/upcoming-services/>

**Sunday, September 3<sup>rd</sup> – NO SERVICE (Labor Day Weekend)**

**Sunday, September 10th**

Title: "Ingathering!" (*Led by our ministry, faith development and music staff*)

Join us on the Common (rain location: in the Sanctuary) for our Ingathering service, in which we celebrate coming back together after the summer and begin to turn our minds and hearts to the year ahead. This fun, interactive, and music-filled service for all ages will include our annual water communion ceremony, so please remember to bring your water that you've saved from the summer to include in the ritual. (Water will be provided for anyone who wants to participate.) After the service, stay and join us for a multigenerational celebration with food, fellowship, and fun activities for all ages. Cliff Chuang, the new Superintendent for Bedford Public Schools will also be stopping by after the service to say hello to families.

**Sunday, September 17th**

Title: "My One Sermon (of Six)" (*Rev. Jamie Hinson-Rieger preaching*)

It is said that every preacher really has only the one sermon, from which they spin their variations and elaborations week after week. Well, by my count I have six! Come and hear one of the big ones this Sunday, which might also be called "You are already enough, or why Universalism is having the last laugh within contemporary UU." Let's explore the radical implications of our radical theology of universal love.

**Sunday, September 24th**

Title: "What Wondrous Love is This" (*Rev. Annie Gonzalez preaching*)

Each Sunday at First Parish we say: "Love is the spirit of this church." In a new proposed draft of the UUA principles and purposes, we put love at the center of all our other values. But what is this love we are centering? We'll explore love as a feeling, love as a practice, and more.

**Next deadline is Sept. 24th**

The Parishioner is published monthly. Deadline is generally the **last Sunday** of each month. Send submissions to: [editors@uubedford.org](mailto:editors@uubedford.org).

## A Note from Jamie

Dear First Parish Community,

Our family has been in Bedford just about a month now, and we are settling in very well, thank you to everyone who has asked. We're getting used to the twisty roads, we've learned how to pronounce Woo-burn and Wistah, and we've dined on locally sourced corn, garden-grown zucchini, and the freshest eggs in the world from Chip-In farms. We have not yet been to Bedford Farms for ice cream, but it is on the list. In and around these things, I've been meeting with the amazing First Parish staff, the Board, and several key committees. If I haven't had a chance to sit down with your committee or team yet, I promise I will soon. Please feel free to reach out with questions or concerns or just to chat in the meantime. I am enjoying getting to know the community better, and that will continue to be my priority for this year.

Meanwhile, in these first few weeks, I have already experienced many of the things that make First Parish a special place, from community building events like the convivial and delectable Tapas-for-Twenty meal (part of the service auction) to community service projects like bringing meals and clothes to refugee families here in Bedford and Billerica; from a butterfly release ceremony with the Pastoral Care team, to a conceptual walk-through of a Twilight Zone themed Haunted House, which is also a beautiful explication of UU values. I am seeing in concrete terms what you mean when you say, "Love is the spirit of this church, and service is its law." I'm grateful to be a part of it. Next week I'll be joining Lisa Maria for the Religious Education Mini-Camp so I can connect more with families and see the RE program in action. All in all, it's been a great first month.

And now here we are coming up on the official start of the church year. As we look forward to a new year of Sunday services, I wanted to share with you an opportunity to support the worship life of the congregation in a new way. This year we will be forming a Worship Associates team to assist the ministry staff in creating and leading Sunday services. The Worship Associates (WAs) will meet with the ministry staff monthly to reflect on past services and help plan for upcoming services. They will also take turns performing various roles in Sunday services—giving readings, chalice lightings, short reflections, and so on. The idea is to support the ministry team while empowering lay people and bringing more voices and perspectives into the worship life of the congregation. Note: this model is different from a Lay Services Committee in that the ministry team still has final responsibility and accountability for all Sunday services. It is a collaborative model, not a dividing-up-the-Sundays model. Of course, we will also continue to have guest speakers and lay-led services as well.

I am excited about this new approach, and I hope you will be as well. If you are interested in serving on the Worship Associates team for the coming year, please email me at [minister@uubedford.org](mailto:minister@uubedford.org). It is a one-year commitment with an option to serve a second year. We would like to have six to eight members on the team.

Thank you to everyone for the kindness of your welcome, for your support of First Parish, and for your service to the community. Here's to a great new year!

Peace,  
Jamie



## Minister's Musings

I saw a meme on social media yesterday that said something like "I'm supposed to see terrible things happening over and over on the news and then I'm supposed to just go around saying normal things like 'it's tomato season'?! I laughed because it resonated. With seemingly constant reports of climate change fueled natural disasters, random or hate motivated gun violence, and plenty of other awfulness afoot, it does seem absurd to go on with normal life, pretending apocalypse is not upon us. Also, it's tomato season! And my housemate just made a tomato galette with the tomatoes from Vanguarden farm in Dover, MA, which is surviving the floods despite being a small organic farm. My friend Evan, who grew up in this church, works there. And I got to eat his tomatoes for dinner. The galette had a crisp olive oil crust and savory garlic and I added basil (also from the farm), and it tasted like all the beauty of late August.

And by the time this Parishioner comes out we will be fully into Back-to-School season, a less delicious and busier season than tomato season. And then it will quite quickly be Back-to-Church season with an Ingathering worship and celebration to welcome you all back and to celebrate our new Senior Minister. It will feel like September, the excitement and buzz and exhaustion and overwhelmingness of this time of year. And it will feel like church, familiar and quirky and loving and challenging. And whatever heartbreaking things are happening in your personal lives and whatever bad news continues to bombard us, we will still be here, saying things like "welcome back!" and "how was your summer?" We will keep rolling through the seasons, appreciating them and enjoying them, despite it all.

- Annie



## Office Matters

This is a new column for the monthly newsletter and one I've been thinking of starting for a while. Hopefully it will provide you with some helpful information and also keep you in the loop as to what's going on in the building/office.

For starters, I'm sad to let everyone know that Mike Hamilton (our most recent Custodian) resigned this week for personal reasons. Joel Parks and other Physical Plant Team members will be sending out a volunteer sign-up again, similar to what we had over summer to assist in weekly tasks. I'll be putting the word out and placing new ads soon but, in the meantime, we have several upcoming events (including Ingathering) that will require many hands to be successful.

Stacey and I are so happy that Rev. Jamie is now onboard and we are both looking forward to kicking off the 23/24 church year. As a reminder, the **office hours are MON-FRI, 9AM-2PM**. Some items to share as we get underway:

\*I am working on making the gender-neutral bathroom on the first floor a scent-free bathroom. As Mike and I were in the middle of this project, it may take me a little longer to have it ready. My hope is to have it done by Ingathering.

\*In an effort to accommodate everyone fairly, I'm asking that all requests for rooms/Zoom meetings be made in advance by at least 3 business days. We understand last minute requests will occasionally happen, but now that the building is fully open again, we need to try and put some tighter controls in place. And to help you remember who does what, try this little rhyme... ....*"Stacey books the rooms and Brenda books the Zooms."*

-Brenda Rybicki, Parish Administrator

## News from the Parish Board

Welcome back to yet another church year – our 294<sup>th</sup> year as a beloved church community gathered on Bedford Common! After two challenging years of transition, we are so excited to welcome the Reverend Jamie Hinson-Rieger as Senior Minister to First Parish. He joins the long list of ministers who have served this church over the centuries. We have begun the next chapter of our history in which all of us will have a role to play.

This summer has been busy, and we are so thankful to everyone who has pitched in to help when needed. I know I will forget someone if I try to list individual names, so many Thank-You's are in order: to the ministers, office staff, custodian and many volunteers. Here are a few of the things that happened:

- The Parsonage was made ready for Jamie and his family's arrival at the end of July.
- Well-attended lay and staff-led summer services have been held weekly since July 16.
- There have been 4 memorial services and one wedding.
- Planning has been underway for Ingathering, Faith Development Programs, the Haunted House, the new photo directory, this year's Salons (Congregational Conversations), upcoming services, filling committee positions, the steeple repair, repainting of the front of the church and, yes, more memorial services.

The Board wants to bring your attention to a few important upcoming events to put on your calendar now.

- **September 10: Ingathering** – always a fun-filled celebration of our community.
- **September 24 (11:30 – 1:00):** Our **first Salon** of the year with the topic: **Faith Development for Children (Pre-K -8<sup>th</sup> grade)**. Please join Board, the Faith Development Committee, Lisa Maria and Rev. Annie for discussion about what the needs and interests are for Children's Faith Development in this changing landscape of families' lives today and the realistic availability of volunteer teachers. All are welcome to this candid, forward-looking conversation.
- **Friday – Sunday, October 13-15:** The **Haunted House** returns.
- **Friday - Saturday, October 20 and 21: Photo Sessions** for the new photo directory (the first since 2016). Nina Wampler, for the Membership Committee, is sharing specific information about how to sign up. Our hope is that **everyone** will participate.
- **Saturday, March 23, 2024** (I know it's next year's calendar.): **Installation Service and Celebration for Jamie.**

Finally, as happened last year, you will find two recurring columns in the monthly Parishioners. The **"We Need You"** lists immediate volunteer needs and the **"Common Knowledge"** explains some of our First Parish traditions. Thanks in advance for paying attention and seeing where you might be able to help if asked.

With gratitude,

Sarah Dorer, Parish Board President; Mark Bailey, Peter Cho, Vicki Gaw (Treasurer), Susan Lincoln, Alan MacRobert, Jenn McClain

## Treasurer's Update

We continue to have a healthy cash flow from donations and pledges received during the summer hiatus. Thank you. Expenses are above budget related to costs for the ongoing steeple work and renovations to the parsonage.

-Vicki Gaw, Treasurer



## Parish Nose

*Please send submissions of personal joys, sorrows, or milestone moments that you would like shared in the Parish Nose to [minister@uubedford.org](mailto:minister@uubedford.org) by the fourth Friday of the month.*

Amy Jackson (daughter of Craig and Margaret) married Niladri Sinha on July 8, 2023, in a Hindu-Unitarian Universalist fusion ceremony. This was the day before Margaret and Craig's 35th wedding anniversary.

Sam Gravina won the 6th Annual Joe Kopka Memorial MiniGolf Tournament at the Barbershop Jamboree in Meredith, NH. (Mad skills, Sam!)

Webb Tilney will soon be dropping off his daughter overseas to start college. He is incredibly happy and hopeful for her as he tries not to sob uncontrollably.

Mercedes Kane and family will be remembering her daughter Tracy Cavallo with a brief ceremony in the Memorial Garden in September.

*We have received notice of several deaths in the community. Please join us in sending love and care to the families and friends of those who have died.*

Maria Green's sister, Barbara, passed away in July after a long illness. She was a loving sister and Aunt.

Recently we've learned of the death of former parishioner Greta Rothman. A dozen years ago, she and her husband Irv moved to a retirement community in Maine, where Irv later died. Honoring Greta, John Gibbons will officiate at a memorial gathering on Sunday, October 1 at 1:30pm at the Ocean View retirement community in Falmouth, ME.

A private graveside committal service for Betty and Bob Slechta was held in Shawsheen Cemetery on August 9 with John Gibbons officiating. With their interests in history and genealogy, cemeteries were among Betty and Bob's favorite places!

Signe (Sing) Hanson passed away peacefully on August 12, surrounded by her loving family in a sunlit room looking out on her gardens. Sing served as Director of Exhibitions at Boston Children's Museum for 35 years and was a founding board member of the Bedford Center for the Arts. A piece of Sing's artwork depicting the First Parish meeting house greets you at the entrance to the Sanctuary. A memorial service for Sing will be held at First Parish on Friday, September 8, at 1:00pm, with Jamie Hinson-Rieger officiating. Please keep Carl Hanson and all of Sing's family and loved ones in your thoughts.

We are saddened to announce the passing of Nancy Forrest on August 19th. A memorial service will be held at First Parish at 11am on Saturday, September 16<sup>th</sup>, with Jamie Hinson-Rieger officiating. A more complete announcement will be made at a later date.

## Page Room Reminder

As we begin another church year, please remember that the Page Room (second floor, side balcony closer to South Road) is set aside on Sundays for those who need or prefer to be in fully masked company. This means if you choose to sit in the Page Room or even walk through the Page Room on Sunday you must be wearing a well-fitting mask covering nose and mouth. The rest of the church building is a mask-optional space. We appreciate everyone helping to make our services more accessible to a wider group of people by protecting this one fully-masked space.

## Youth Happenings

### Junior Youth Group (Middle School)

Our Junior Youth Group (JYG) will resume after summer break on Weds September 13th. All 6th - 8th graders are welcome for snacks, check in, games and mini-service projects! We'll continue on Wednesdays through September.

### Senior Youth Group (High School)

Our Senior Youth Group (SYG) will resume after summer break with a cook out on Sunday September 24th at 5:30 pm at the church. We'll continue meeting roughly twice a month, alternating outings for justice work, community service and fun with conversations and games at the church.



## Faith Development Programming PreK-8<sup>th</sup>: Fall 2023

Welcome back to a new church year, everyone!

### PreK-7th Grade Sunday Mornings

Sunday morning September 17th we welcome all PreK-7th Graders participating in Sunday morning Faith Development programming. We'll talk about covenant, reconnect from the time away over the summer, and share about all new fall beginnings (New school year! New afterschool activities! New Church Year! New Senior Minister!).

On Sunday September 24th we will start our Small Group Ministry for Kids Sunday morning Faith Development for PreK-5th Grade. We'll engage with stories, a time for fellowship/sharing, games, crafts, and other group activities on either our church's monthly theme, a UU day of note or a cultural or religious holiday nearby in the calendar.

On Sunday September 24th 6th/7th Grade will begin their engagement with Crossing Paths (aka Building Bridges aka Neighboring Faiths).

If we have a minimum of 4-5 regularly expected PreK-1st Graders in attendance this fall, then we will do our best to offer Spirit Play for that age group, and the 2nd-5th graders will continue with our Small Group Ministry for Kids.

### 6th-8th Grade Junior Youth Group

Junior Youth Group (JYG) starts back up on Wednesday September 13th 3:30-5:00. We had a fantastic Step-Up Day last June and are looking forward to a wonderful JYG group again this year.

If your youth wants to bring friends who are either not yet registered or known to our community, we ask that we have a chance to connect either by text/call/email with a parent of the new friend, so we know that the parent knows where they are and how to reach the adults in charge at JYG.

We ask families to [Sign Up for Snack](#) on a rotating basis- about once every few months. Snacks should be for about a dozen people and nut-free.



## 8th Grade Our Whole Lives

We are excited to offer OWL again this year for 8th Graders and any 9th graders (or home school equivalent) who did not take it last year. We have partnered with the Billerica UU congregation to offer OWL this year. Our main teachers will be Mark Bailey (Bedford) and Barbara Moloney (Billerica), with additional help from both congregation's trained volunteers.

We are very close to having a final calendar to determine which sessions/weekends will be what, but this is what we are looking at so please pencil in:

OWL Parent Orientation Sunday September 17th 2:00. This is Parents-Only: we encourage all parents to attend even if you have had an older child go through the program so that you can connect with other parents. However, one-on-one Parent Orientations can be scheduled if you cannot attend on this date.

OWL Sessions would be mostly Sunday afternoons 3:00-4:45, alternating between our church and the Billerica congregation. There will be three sleepovers on Fridays 6:00pm-Saturdays Noon. The sleepover weekends are November 17th-18th, February 2nd-3rd, and April 4th-5th.

### **Nursery**

The Nursery will be open for Babies and Toddlers on Sundays from 9:45-11:30 starting Sunday September 10th, Ingathering.

### **Registration**

We have two registration forms this year- one for returning families who filled out a full registration last year, and one for new families. You can sign your youth up for JYG, OWL, and Youth Choirs in the registration form.

We ask that all active First Parish families with children/youth birth-12th Grade in their household to register- whether your kids come to basically everything, or only a couple special event things sometimes. Please register by September 10th!

Returning Families Registration: [bit.ly/FPBReturningFamily](http://bit.ly/FPBReturningFamily)

New Families Registration: [bit.ly/FPBNewFamily](http://bit.ly/FPBNewFamily)

### **Upcoming Dates**

Sunday 9/10 10:00 Ingathering All Ages Worship and Ingathering Celebration

Wednesday 9/13 3:30-5:00 Junior Youth Group for 6th-8th Graders

Sunday 9/17 10:00 Faith Development Kick Off PreK-7th Grade

Sunday 9/17 12:30/TBD 8th Grade Our Whole Lives Parent Orientation (Parents only)

Wednesday 9/20 3:30-5:00 JYG

Sunday 9/24 10:00 Faith Development Programming for PreK-7th Grade

Wednesday 9/27 3:30-5:00

Sunday 9/29 10:00 Faith Development Programming for PreK-7th Grade

Sunday 9/29 3:00 Our Whole Lives Session 1 in Billerica

## **Access for ALL**

Access and Inclusion concerns: Even though our Access for ALL committee has disbanded, Committee members are still interested and involved. Access and inclusion are issues that will always concern our community. If you have questions or problems in these areas, please let us know. We have a mailbox in the back hall, bottom row, farthest to the right, where notes may be left, or you are encouraged to call Lee Vorderer at 781-275-5230.

## Musical Notes

For me, every year is the start of a new adventure and I expect this year to be no exception. This September begins my 19<sup>th</sup> year at First Parish. **Sandra LaBarge-Neumann** will be back playing the organ, **Steve Sussman** will return to play the piano and **Bob and Fran Tyler** will continue to serenade us with their inimitable stylings. It makes everyone happy that **Natan Wythe** will be returning to direct the youth choirs. Plans are also being made for the return of other pianists/instrumentalists to make guest appearances. We're very fortunate at First Parish to have such a wealth of musicians. What their musical talent contributes to the diverse fabric of our community is immense.

Here's music information for upcoming 10 a.m. services –

**Sunday, September 10<sup>th</sup>:** For In-Gathering the adult choir will sing the song *Welcome Ev'ry Guest* by colonial New England composer William Billings. Bob and Fran Tyler will be providing their usual mix of delightful tunes. Joanne and Ted Glover will be adding a few melodies on the bagpipes and drum. Natan Whyte will lead the youth and congregation in a song. It will be a cornucopia of music to start our upcoming church year and to celebrate the start of Rev. Jamie Hinson-Rieger's tenure as our new minister.

**Sunday, September 17<sup>th</sup>:** Steve Sussman will be playing piano.

**Sunday, September 24<sup>th</sup>:** Sandra LaBarge-Neumann will be playing organ. The adult choir will sing William Byrd's beautiful "Ave verum" in honor of the 500th anniversary of Byrd's death. They will also sing Fred Gramann's peaceful "Still, Still with Thee" accompanied by Sandra and Carol Epple, flute. It's music not to be missed.

**Mark your calendars!** On Saturday morning, **September 30, 2023 (time TBA)**, the Music Committee will be hosting a **Jazz Brunch in honor of Bob and Fran Tyler** featuring (obviously) Bob and Fran Tyler as well as Dean and Buffie Groves. More information is elsewhere in this Parishioner and more details will be forthcoming as the date gets closer.

Isn't it time to think about joining the adult choir? If you're interested, e-mail me at [bconner@uubedford.org](mailto:bconner@uubedford.org). Plans for the coming year include a Christmas Eve service filled with different versions of the Latin text *O Magnum Mysterium* as well as different arrangements of familiar carols; for Good Friday 2024 there will be lots of Baroque music by J.S. Bach, Handel and Vivaldi; and Music Sunday 2024 (May 5, 2024) will feature music by the country western icon and all-around fabulous human being, Dolly Parton. These are just a few examples the wide variety of wonderful music to be included in our services.

Additional information about both the adult and youth choirs below.

- Bradford Conner, Music Director

### Rehearsal Schedule of First Parish Choirs for all ages

- **Adult Choir** – every Thursday from 7:30-9:00 p.m. in the sanctuary
- **Senior Youth Choir** (Grades 6-12) every Monday from 3:45-4:30 p.m. in the common room (please note that rehearsals are scheduled for 45 minutes at this time)
- **KidSing** (Age 5 through Grade 2) every Wednesday from 4:00-4:30 p.m. in the common room (please note that rehearsals are scheduled for 30 minutes at this time)
- **Junior Youth Choir** (Grades 3-5) every Friday from 4:00-4:45 p.m. in the common room (please note that rehearsals are scheduled for 45 minutes at this time)

For adult choir information, please contact Brad Conner at [bconner@uubedford.org](mailto:bconner@uubedford.org). For youth choirs information, please contact Natan Wythe at [youthchoirs@uubedford.org](mailto:youthchoirs@uubedford.org)



## The Music Committee Presents!

*"Where words fail, music speaks." — Hans Christian Andersen*

The FPB Music Committee is proud to present yet another year full of exciting concerts. Please save the dates! Please especially take note that the Jazz Brunch is coming up very soon at the end of September!

**Jazz Brunch in honor of the Tylers** – Saturday morning, **September 30, 2023, time TBA**, featuring Bob and Fran Tyler as well as Dean and Buffie Groves.

**Back Bay Ringers Holiday Concert** – Saturday afternoon, **December 9, 2023, 2:00 p.m.**, back for their bi-annual concert.

**14<sup>th</sup> Annual Valentine's Concert** – Sunday afternoon, **February 11, 2024, 4:00 p.m.** featuring Cynthia Mork, Ben Sears, Brad Conner and others, followed by a chocolate reception.

**Bi-Annual Youth Cabaret** – date and time TBA, produced by Natan Wythe, including a post-show reception.

**Irish Celebration: A Family Event** – Saturday afternoon/evening, **March 16, 2024, 5:00 p.m.**, featuring the Faulkner-Carrolls and others, including pub food

**Howie Rashba Folk Music Concert** – Sunday afternoon, **April 7, 2024, 3:00 p.m.**

## New Photo Directory for First Parish

A pictorial directory is a powerful tool in our church to help each of us know each other better. We need an updated photo directory to help our new senior minister Reverend Jamie Hinson-Rieger get to know us. Our last directory was produced in 2016 and is now outdated, so it is time for a new one. Photo dates will be: October 20, 21 2023. You will have a professional photography session, see your proofs, and you'll have the opportunity to purchase extra portraits for family and friends.

Please make an appointment to have your picture taken at one of the sign-up locations at the church on one of the sign-up Sundays in September and early October, OR YOU CAN SIGN-UP ON OUR CHURCH'S WEBSITE <https://www.uubedford.org/> by clicking on the Photo Directory link on the right hand side of the page. Alternatively, you can click on the Facebook link for the Photo Directory. Your participation will help the church and yourself. **Every family photographed for the directory will receive a copy of the directory and an 8x10 portrait at no cost.** So please, sign-up today!



## First Parish Social Justice Library

Do you know about the **First Parish Social Justice Library** on the lower level? It contains over fifty books donated by the Peace and Justice Committee and church members, including children's and young adult versions of major works, like the *1619 Project* and Ibram X. Kendi's *Stamped from the Beginning*. Well over half of the books address racial justice issues and others explore environmental and economic justice, disarmament and much more. Readers can borrow books from this rich collection using a simple sign-out and return system. Check it out!

For more information, contact Pam Foresman, Lois Pulliam or Ellen Scheiner.

## First Parish Women's Book Group News

The book group meets in the Common Room on the following Sunday nights at 6 p.m. at First Parish. If there are any changes to that we will send information to the Anno list. Please contact Margaret Jackson at [mjacksonfpb@yahoo.com](mailto:mjacksonfpb@yahoo.com) with any questions.

2023 - 2024 Church Year Book Group Books		
Meeting Date	Book	Author
10/1/2023	Devil in the White City	Erik Larson
11/12/2023	Foster	Claire Keegan
12/10/2023	The Sharper Your Knife, the Less You Cry	Kathleen Flinn
1/7/2024	Book Swap	
3/3/2024	River Sing Me Home	Eleanor Shearer
4/7/2024	Nowhere Girl	Cheryl Diamond
5/19/2024	Under the Whispering Door	TJ Klune
6/9/2024	Book Selection for the following year	



## Plant Fair Update

Our Plant & Craft Fair numbers are in! We ended up making over >\$5200 - pretty good considering the rain and increased plant costs this year! Just wanted to give another BIG THANKYOU to all who made this happen!!! Keep on the look-out for fall planning for next year's 2024 Plant and Craft Fair!

Regards, Bea Brunkhorst and Dorothy Africa

## FP Short Story Group Invites Your Participation

The Short Story Group will resume its weekly discussions on September 14. We meet via Zoom from 9:30 to 11:00 am to discuss a story we all have read during the prior week. (Our opening story is "In Reference to Your Recent Communication" by Tessa Brown.) No literary expertise is needed, only an interest in talking about what we all have read.

New participants are welcome to become part of this long-standing group. If you are interested in joining us, contact Joan Bowen at [jrcbowen11@gmail.com](mailto:jrcbowen11@gmail.com). The reading list for September including the names of the two books currently serving as our resources and the Zoom link will be forwarded to you.

We plan to continue to meet via Zoom because our group includes some former parishioners who have moved to other states but want to continue to be a part of this group.

## Upcoming Events/Actions: Stop Private Jet Expansion at Hanscom or Anywhere

### 1. Stand-outs @ Veterans Memorial Park, 160 Great Rd, Bedford:

Thurs, August 31, 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM: 8/31 RSVP [here](#).

Thurs, September 7, 7:30 AM - 8:30 AM: 9/7 RSVP [here](#).

Thurs, September 14, 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM: 9/14 RSVP [here](#).

Thurs, September 21, 7:30 AM - 8:30 AM: 9/21 RSVP [here](#).

Join us for a public stand-out to oppose private jet expansion at Hanscom or anywhere. We will have some signs – or make/bring your own. Meet at Veterans Memorial Park at 160 Great Road, Bedford to stand in solidarity with signs as people go by. For Stand-outs in area towns see: [www.StopPrivateJetExpansion.org](http://www.StopPrivateJetExpansion.org)

See article [HERE](#) about Bedford's weekly protests.

### 2. Yard Signs (if in Bedford area):

If your yard has good visibility to passing cars, stop by the EJC table after ingathering to pick up a sign (it would be helpful to let Corinne know at [cordoud@gmail.com](mailto:cordoud@gmail.com) so we have an idea of how many signs to bring).

### 3. Please sign and share the [PETITION HERE](#).

Governor Healey can stop this disastrous project. Also, see links below to watch the recording of the recent Mothers Out Front Climate Action Call to learn more about stopping private jet expansion, and taking action to write a personalized letter to the governor:

>> [Event Recording](#)

>> [Action Instructions](#)

### 4. Hold the Date: Sept 28, 6:30 - 7:45pm, Bedford Community Forum on Climate Impact Private Jet Expansion

The speakers will be Neil Rasmussen (in-person), Emily Mitchell (in-person), and Bill McKibben (via zoom). The forum will be at the Bedford Town Hall, and will be an in-person/hybrid event.

Thanks, Corinne Doud, Environmental Justice Committee

## Update on Caring Coordinator Role

Last spring, the Lay Pastoral team introduced the role of Caring Coordinator to replace the Caring Crew that had been a part of First Parish for many years, providing assistance to parishioners in times of need by helping with rides to medical or other appointments and assistance with meals. For the most part, parishioners have actively been using the announcement list to ask for assistance and this seems to be working well. Anyone not comfortable with using the announcement list or who wanted more privacy could send an email to the Caring Coordinator for that month.

What we found is that in six months, we have only had 2-3 emails and few people stepping up to be a Caring Coordinator for the month. At this time, we have decided to eliminate the role of Caring Coordinator and encourage anyone in need of assistance to reach out via the announcement list. If you are not comfortable using the list and would prefer more privacy, please contact the church office and they will make appropriate referrals for you. If longer term help is needed, there are folks available who can set up a Sign-Up Genius or other way to schedule assistance. If you are handy with Sign Up Genius and would be willing to be on a list to help in this way, you can contact Marge Heckman at: [maheckman@gmail.com](mailto:maheckman@gmail.com).

As members of First Parish, we are all here to care for each other in times of need. We encourage each of you to both feel comfortable asking for help and stepping in to help when you can.

## Gallery @First Parish

The Gallery @First Parish is pleased to announce an upcoming art exhibit titled “**Affirmation of Life: Art from Today’s Ukraine**” which will be on display beginning September 22 and continuing through October 7. The show will offer visitors a rare chance to see and enjoy contemporary art from Ukraine. Much of this art will be on view for the first time in the United States and features work made by artists working there today.

Special performances and presentations will complement the art show, which has the support of the Bedford Cultural District Partnership, The First Parish and the Ukrainian Cultural Initiative.

The Gallery will be open during church hours 10 am-2pm Monday through Friday. Special events as well as evening and weekend times will be announced. Private showings can also be arranged.

All profits from this show will go to Mriya (<https://mriya-ua.org>), a non-profit organization 501(c) (3) created by local Ukrainians, mostly young professionals and students, to provide humanitarian support for Ukraine as well as support for the arts. Watch the anno list for more information about events connected to the show. Contact Doris Smith at [dorsmith@mac.com](mailto:dorsmith@mac.com) for more information.

## New Programming

### Item 1

#### **NEW: Tuesday Night Weekly Meditation Group, with Rev. Jamie and Sandy Currier**

Beginning Tuesday, September 26, Rev. Jamie and Sandy Currier will be leading a weekly meditation group, every Tuesday at 7pm through the end of May. Join us for about 20 minutes of meditation followed by a time to check-in. The meditations will be mostly varieties of silent, mindfulness, compassion, or breath meditation. No experience is necessary. This group is open to all theological/philosophical perspectives on meditation. We will meet in the Bacon Room and also on Zoom. Take a break, unwind, recenter, and recharge during your week.

Zoom Info:

<https://zoom.us/j/97274671143?pwd=VHdldTRINTNTREowczM1ZjY3SkpRdz09>

Meeting ID: 972 7467 1143

Passcode: 043555

### Item 2

#### **Thursday, September 21st, 11am-12pm: Small Group Discussion at Carleton-Willard Village**

Every third Thursday, Rev. Jamie will lead a conversation at Carleton-Willard Village around a philosophical or topical question from a Unitarian Universalist perspective. In September we will look at Joanna Macy's concept of "Active Hope" and ask "In the face of the significant challenges we face, where do we find hope in the world today, and where are we creating hope in the world today?"

## Interested in Volunteering?

You might be asking yourself “Lisa Maria- do you need some more volunteers for Sunday morning Faith Development and Junior Youth Group?” And the answer would be YES! I’m happy to invite in any volunteers with whatever your schedule/life reality looks like...

-available a few Sundays only through December and not sure after that? OK!

-available lots of Sundays but never quite sure when so want to be asked to be helpful often and close to the day even if you say no half the time? OK!

-not available on Sundays but sometimes on Wednesdays 3:30-5:00 with our amazing 6th-8th Graders? OK!

-available sometimes and love to do class prep for Sunday mornings? OK!

-available often but prefer to be the “no prep 2nd adult”? OK!

We have lots of ways to accommodate our volunteers’ schedules and realities. Let Lisa Maria know what works for you!

## We Need You!

As always there are so many ways to participate in making First Parish run and we need you! We know that many of us have super full lives and that all of us have different abilities and amounts of energy to offer. We hope that everyone in our community is finding ways to give of their time so that it's not a hardship and so that our work is distributed widely throughout our community.

### 1. Help with Sunday morning Faith Development

See Lisa Maria's column for more details. We need adults who can support our Sunday morning children's programs. Even if you are only available some Sundays or want to be able to just show up as the second adult, we still need you! Contact Lisa Maria at [directorfaithdevchildren@uubedford.org](mailto:directorfaithdevchildren@uubedford.org) or find her or give her a call to get more involved.

### 2. Help with our Youth Ministry

Our Junior Youth Group (JYG) meets on Wednesdays from 3:30 - 5 pm and we definitely need volunteers to help Rev. Annie and Lisa Maria run JYG. You'll be the second adult and don't need to prep the session, just show up ready for fun and chaos! Let Rev. Annie know if you can help at [agonzalez@uubedford.org](mailto:agonzalez@uubedford.org)

### 3. Sunday morning Coffee volunteers

We always need these! With Rich Daugherty moving away and Cath Van Praagh taking over for him for recruitment, we'll definitely still need you. Keep an eye out for how you can sign up for this very important aspect of community life!

## Arts Playshop

Come have an exciting time opening new pathways to your creative expression! The Arts Playshop is managed by Niela Miller of FCU in Littleton. We meet on Zoom once a month (usually the 'teen' Saturday, from 11am-1pm) and do experiments and projects with show-and-tell, focusing on our process, not a finished result. Periodically, others in the group facilitate a creative exploration that interests them which they want to share. No training in the arts is necessary, just a curiosity and willingness to experiment and share your process. There is no fee but you are welcome to contribute to FCU if so moved. Contact Niela at [artsfem2003@yahoo.com](mailto:artsfem2003@yahoo.com) by September 10 if interested.

### BIO

Niela Miller was in FP Bedford for 17 years and has been at FCU Littleton for 22 years. She combines a background in many arts (visual arts, performing, composing, theatre arts, singing, piano, guitar, writing, and dance), education, training, coaching, humanistic psychology and organization development. She has used various approaches to the development and application of the creative process throughout her life. She combines arts-based processes with her training in Gestalt and Jungian Process Psychology. She is a lifelong learner in the arts and invites others to explore their own creative processes in a variety of modalities. For samples of hers, plus other background, see her [website: www.peoplesystemspotential.com](http://www.peoplesystemspotential.com).