



The Parishioner

News of the First Parish in Bedford

Unitarian Universalist

On the Common, Bedford, Massachusetts

Spirit...Justice...Community

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Upcoming Sunday Services*

*To join us via ZOOM, click on: <https://www.uubedford.org/worship/upcoming-services/>

The theme for December is "Hope is a gift." We celebrate those who kept hope alive and passed it down to us. This is a month where we also acknowledge the many traditional celebrations of hope and family and gift-giving that happen at this time of year.

Advent is November 30 – December 24, and we will light the Advent candles each week, as is this congregation's tradition. If you look up in the balcony, you will also see various representations of the holy family and the wise men making their journey around the Sanctuary.

Note: Hanukkah begins the evening of December 14 and runs through Monday, December 22.

Sunday, December 7th

Title: "A Mixed Bag" (*Led by Rev. Annie*)

Gifts, the giving and receiving of them, can be a mixed bag. There can be stress and joy in finding the right gift, and disappointment or deep gratitude in receiving one. And hope can be a mixed bag too, full of stress, joy, gratitude and disappointment as well. We'll explore the gift of hope in all its complex glory.

Sunday, December 14th

Title: "Regifting Hope" (*Led by Rev. Jamie*)

'Tis the season of gifting and regifting. The beautiful thing about the gift of hope is it only grows in the regifting. How are we passing it on this season?

Sunday, December 21st

Title: "As We Await the Dawn" (*Led by Rev. Jamie*)

We celebrate the resilience of those who keep the vision of dawn alive through the long dark night. We celebrate the gifts the darkness has to offer too as we await the return of the light.

December 21 is the solstice, the longest night of the year and also the beginning of the returning light. From this point on, the days will get longer.

Note: After the service, join us in the Sanctuary at 11:30 for "The First Parish Nowell," the annual carol sing-along led by Music Director, Brad Conner. See the music descriptions section in this issue of the Parishioner for more information.

Music Committee Events	17	Wednesday, December 24th, 3:30PM Title: "Christmas Eve: No Rehearse Pageant" "Everyone's favorite No Rehearse Pageant" is back! All ages are invited to help us depict the classic nativity story of Jesus' birth with music from our youth choirs, carols, and of course candles."
Back Bay Ringers Concert	18	Wednesday, December 24th, 8:00PM (<i>Prelude Music at 7:40PM</i>) Title: "Traditional Christmas Eve Service: A Sacred Journey" This year we will reflect on the Christmas story as a story of migration, danger, and asylum seeking, with its clear parallels to the present day. How does the ancient wisdom of this story, and the hope it represents, call us to respond? This service will feature exquisite performances of two Bach cantatas by the adult choir and soloists with orchestra, as well as many traditional carols. We will close singing Silent Night by Candlelight. Please see the music descriptions elsewhere in this issue for more information.
Sunday, December 28th Title: "Make Space for Hope – Burning Bowl Service" (<i>Led by Rev. Jamie</i>) Recently The "Burning Bowl" ritual is a Unitarian Universalist end of year tradition, in which we let go of the things we are ready to let go of with a flash of fire courtesy of magician's flash paper, to make space for new things in the new year. Rev. Jamie will also be preaching on what it might mean to make space for hope in 2026.		
Next deadline is Dec. 29th	The Parishioner is published monthly. Deadline is generally the last Monday of each month. Send submissions to: editors@uubedford.org .	

A Note from Jamie

Dear First Parish Members and Friends,

I wanted to give you an update on some social justice-related actions which I have been privileged to be a part of, that have been cooking since my report to you at the November 9 congregational meeting.

Earlier this week your minister Emeritus, the Rev. John Gibbons, and I submitted a letter for publication in the Bedford Citizen decrying the use of Hanscom Field for ICE flights that take detained immigrants from Massachusetts to other locations. I appreciate the expressions of support we have received for this letter. If you have questions or concerns, I hope you will reach out.

The day that we submitted the letter, the New York Times publicized a column detailing the unconscionable (and unconstitutional) abuses that immigrants are subject to as a routine part of these ICE detentions. Many of these abuses are taking place right in our backyard at the District Ave. facility in Burlington. Tomorrow (Tuesday, November 25) I will be at the Statehouse giving testimony (with other clergy) about the cruelty and immorality of the deportation machine to support the Dignity Not Deportations act and the Safe Communities Act. This is all done with the support of UU Mass Action, our partner in social justice action. First Parish is a member congregation of UU Mass Action. I serve on the UU Mass Action immigration justice core organizing team.

During the Advent season (November 30-December 24) First Parish in Bedford is partnering with our fellow "First Parish" UU congregations in Lincoln, Concord, and Lexington (all members of our summer worship consortium) to hire an artist to create a movable public outdoor art exhibit that will connect the imagery of the nativity scene to the abuses experienced by immigrants in America today. What kind of reception would Mary, Jesus, and Joseph receive in America today?

Each congregation will take turns hosting the art exhibit for a week during Advent. (First Parish Bedford will host it the week leading up to Christmas Eve.) The Board has approved our share of the expense of creating the artwork and the hosting of the art on our campus. I appreciate the support, critical feedback, and good questions received from the Public Witness Team, Immigration Justice Ministry Team, and Fine Art Gallery team. This is admittedly an experiment as a multi-UU congregation social justice collaboration (and a public art collaboration.) We are also seeking other interfaith collaborators in the community. I look forward to hearing your thoughts about the experience and the experiment as it unfolds.

At the congregational meeting, you heard the Board's goals for the year. One of those goals is for First Parish to build new avenues of collaboration, to deepen our existing relationships, and to boldly live out our UU values in public.

No one exemplifies this more than Rev. Annie. Much of Rev. Annie's work in this arena takes place outside her official role at First Parish as Minister of Faith Development, but her work as an immigration justice organizer is immense. To say she is an inspiration to all of us is an understatement.

But equally I am inspired by all of you and your incredible acts of justice-making, such as:

- The Public Witness Team, holding vigils on the Common every week since March, leading an enormous No Kings rally in October, and working to build a coalition in Bedford and beyond;
- The Immigration Justice Team, housing immigrants, supporting immigrants, fundraising, advocating, protesting, organizing, collaborating, and showing up seemingly everywhere people are fighting for and supporting immigrants;
- The Fine Art Gallery, with their amazing show "What Does Democracy Look Like (to You)?" bringing justice, art, and music together in a powerful and public way;

- The Environmental Justice Committee, whose tireless work in environmental advocacy, resistance, and coalition building is pushing back on private jet expansion and a lot of bad legislation and is a model for other communities all around the country.

I hope you are proud of the way First Parish truly exemplifies love at work in the world. The church continues to “leave the building,” and that is made possible by all you do inside the building to create and sustain this special community.

As we enter the holiday season, I wish you joy, peace, and rest. I am, as always, grateful to be a part of First Parish.

Peace, Jamie



Parish Board Notes

ministry, noun: a person or thing through which something is accomplished
minster, verb: to give aid or service

- *Merriam Webster Dictionary*

On Sunday, November 23, I attended my first ever Parish Council meeting. I acted as scribe for the chair of the council, fellow board member Bea Brunkhorst. As the first meeting of a new program year, the majority of the meeting was about the business of being a committee—skills, resources, goals, protocols, communication, structure—all essential for groups to function effectively, democratically, and impactfully. We ended with committee updates, and as I listened to the chairs share their work as well as their struggles to recruit new members, I was struck by the inadequacy of the term “committee” in our UU world. What we each do as a part of our church community is so much richer than this word allows for; I put forth that these groups are ministries, and its members are ministering.

Serving coffee to one another; delivering cookies; changing light bulbs; replacing furniture; attending public demonstrations; video recording services; collecting the offertory, installing art shows; collecting names on petitions; watering the flowers; singing in the choir; baking potatoes; housing migrants; teaching our youth; changing batteries in microphones—these are all acts of ministry. For me, using this word transforms our tasks into—dare I say—holy acts. Whether we are serving those around us now, those to follow after us, or stewarding the work of those who came generations before, we are acting in reverence and care. That’s pretty sacred to me.

In that vein, what level of involvement is “holy” for you? Let me highlight a couple of options to consider:

- We only have 2 of the allowable 3 delegates for **UU Urban Ministry!** Cecile Mercado and Robert Schmalz would welcome another First Parishioner to join them in carrying out the mission of working across race and place to dismantle racism and white supremacy.
- The **IT Committee’s Worship Tech Team**, who make sure we can hear (and now read) the worship service in our pews and provide that worship service to 30+ households over Zoom every week, invite others to join them—more hands make light(er) work!
- The **UUA General Assembly is June 14-21, 2026**. It will be a virtual session with local gatherings TBD. While that may seem far off, it is never too soon to start thinking about if you would like to be one of our delegates; attend

a workshops; gather locally; or even submit a program proposal! The [proposal window is currently open](#) for submissions until January 15, 2026.

And... Parish Board OCTOBER Minutes can be found [here](#).

Best wishes for a holiday season filled with light and love,
Stacy Chandler

Office Matters

Well, here we are, the busiest (*and my favorite*) month of the year at First Parish. ❄️ We start December with a Capital Campaign meeting on Tuesday, December 2nd at 11:30AM in Room 204. Our first Friday Potluck will be on Friday, December 5th at 6:00PM in the Common Room. Then on Saturday, December 6th at 2PM, the Holiday Artisan Market returns! As always, please be sure to read further in this newsletter and visit the main [Calendar](#) to see all of our upcoming activities.

***REMINDER: New Pledge Year/Payments**.....our 2025/2026 Stewardship campaign is well underway. As you send in payments for your pledge, **PLEASE** make sure to write the appropriate campaign year on the memo line of your check (i.e. Pledge Year 24/25 or Pledge Year 25/26). **Also, if you are making an online payment, please make sure to select the appropriate designation from the drop-down menus in Breeze.** These steps will help us accurately credit your pledge and donations. If you have any questions, please email or call me at the office.

***Reimbursement Requests**.....there are green reimbursement forms in the office, so if you would like to grab a couple the next time you are in the building, please feel free. Hold on to your receipts and submit them (along with the reimbursement form) to the appropriate Committee Chairperson for approval/signature. **Also, it's very important to check with the Chairperson on which line item in the budget should be debited.** Once it's complete, please submit everything to me in the office or leave them in my mailbox out back. Also please remember to include the address where you wish to have the check mailed. Typically, I work on accounts payable every Wednesday morning and checks go out in Friday's mail.

***Booking Rooms/Zooms**.....in an effort to accommodate everyone fairly, I ask that all requests for rooms/Zoom meetings be made in advance by at least 3-5 business days. We understand last minute requests will occasionally happen, but if everyone tries to work within these parameters, we will be more successful in meeting your needs.

***Hybrid Meetings/Technology**.....If you're having a hybrid meeting, please reach out to the office and request our OWL camera or speakerphone. The camera, phone and all the accessories can be found in the locked cabinet under the mailboxes. Also, we now have ethernet cables (and two types of adapters available) in the following rooms: Common Room, 204 and 203. To book the Owl camera, the speakerphone or request to use one of the adapters, please contact Marika at the office.

***IMPORTANT REMINDER: Leftover Food Policy**.....with all of the food events coming up, this is a reminder about our leftover food policy we put in place with regards to Memorial Services, receptions, parties, etc.... This policy was created in conjunction with the members of the Hospitality Team to addresses safety concerns (i.e. food allergies) and food waste concerns. Below please find the details:

- Leftover perishable foods can only be served to children/youth the same day;
- Common allergen food labels in bowl/basket to be put out with foods being served to reduce accidental consumption;
- Provide communication to internal/external groups that all food must be removed after the event, with the exception of packaged food or one medium tray per item (i.e. one vegetable tray, one fruit tray, etc...);
- Tape/marker will be left in the kitchen for easy labeling of dates on food;

- Ice cream related toppings need to be checked for expiration dates so they don't pile up.

***Email Lists**.....please find below an explanation of **our three email lists** for use by the First Parish community. For anyone who would like to join one (or more) of the three email lists, please contact me so I can verify whether or not you're already signed up. If you're not, I can add you with your preferred email address. (Note: sometimes these messages might end up in your Spam/Junk folders, so please double-check those folders). As always, we ask that you be mindful of each of their uses, and please remember to be kind and respectful with your communications.

- Parish Business (ParishBiz) List – communicates important news and events from FP staff and leadership to the parish. **We encourage all Parishioners to subscribe to ParishBiz.**
- Announcement (Anno) List – used to *facilitate* announcements of news and events of general interest to the community (i.e. Does anyone know a good chiropractor?).
- Discussion (Disc) List – a means of promoting (or responding to) the discussion of issues of general interest to the community.

- Brenda Rybicki, Parish Administrator

Musical Notes

“What is Christmas? It is tenderness for the past, courage for the present, hope for the future. It is a fervent wish that every cup may overflow with blessings rich and eternal, and that every path may lead to peace.” ~ quote by artist and writer Agnes Mae Brown Pharo (1904-1985)

Here's a list of music in the upcoming month –

Sunday, November 30th (10 a.m. service): *Hope*. Steve Sussman will be playing piano.

Saturday afternoon, December 6th (2:00-3:00 p.m.): Members of the adult choir will be singing at the **Holiday Artisans Market**. More information about the full event from 2-6 p.m. is located elsewhere in this newsletter.

Sunday, December 7th (10 a.m. service): *Peace*. Sandra LaBarge-Neumann will be playing organ.

Saturday afternoon, December 13th (2 p.m.): The Music Committee will host the bi-annual return of the Back Bay Ringers in a program entitled "Christmas with the Back Bay Ringers". Look for the flyer with more information elsewhere in this Parishioner. Get your tickets early: www.ticketleap.events/tickets/backbayringers/BBR-bedford. I'd like to give a special shout out to all the members of the Music Committee who work tirelessly to produce these fundraising concerts for the benefit of First Parish. Huzzah!

Sunday, December 14th (10 a.m. service): *Joy*. Steve Sussman will be playing piano, Elizabeth Connors will be playing clarinet and Carlough Faulkner-Carroll will be playing violin. The adult choir will celebrate *Hanukkah* by singing a lively arrangement of *Hine ma tov* and a celebratory arrangement of *Hanukkah Shalom*.

Monday evening, December 15th (6 p.m.): It's the annual **Holiday Sing at the VA!** This is a significant gift from First Parish to our veterans and the Bedford Community. Reverends Jamie Hinson-Rieger and Annie Gonzalez along with the adult choir will be sharing some holiday stories and songs with the many veterans whom we truly appreciate and keep in our thoughts.

Saturday, December 20th (11:30 a.m.): Members of the adult choir will be caroling for **Minuteman Senior Services**, an LGBTQIA+ seniors group, at the **Bedford Council on Aging** (12 Mudge Way, Flint Room).

Sunday, December 21st (10 a.m. service): *Love*. Steve Sussman will be playing piano.

Sunday, December 21st (11:30ish a.m.): ***The First Parish Nowell!*** I will lead our annual Holiday song/Christmas carol sing along. Sandra LaBarge-Neumann will be there playing organ and Ben Sears will be joining me to lead a couple of songs. There will be some short readings by Reverends Annie Gonzalez and Jamie Hinson-Rieger and, as always, it will be great musical fun. Please come and bring anyone and everyone you think would enjoy singing. And don't forget to dress festively!

"Christmas Eve", Wednesday, December 24th (3:30 p.m.): This service will feature the Junior and Senior Youth Choirs under the dynamic direction of Janet Welby. This service is an uplifting way for families to spend time together and celebrate the joy of the evening. Sandra LaBarge-Neumann will be playing organ; Steve Sussman will be playing piano; there will be other instrumentalists. Alumni of the youth choirs will be returning to sing "Carol of the Bells".

"Christmas Eve", Wednesday, December 24th (7:40 p.m. Prelude Music; 8:00 p.m. Traditional service): "Joy to the World", "The First Nowell", "Let There Be Peace on Earth", "Silent Night" and the ringing of the church bell. The service will also include Jamie Hinson-Rieger's homily and the adult choir and soloists with orchestra will perform two cantatas by Johann Sebastian Bach, "Gloria in excelsis Deo", BWV 191 and "For Unto Us a Child Is Born" (in German), BWV, 142.

Sunday, December 30th (10 a.m. service): Steve Sussman will be playing the piano.

After the craziness of the holidays are finished, maybe it's time to think about joining the adult choir? If you're interested, e-mail me at bconner@uubedford.org. Besides always singing great music for Sunday morning services, plans for the coming months include a Good Friday service with music focused on the theme "Beauty in the Shadows" and Music Sunday 2026 (May 3, 2026) which will focus on the theme "We Are ..." featuring choral music from various diverse communities of the United States.

Additional rehearsal information about both the adult and youth choirs is 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) and Junior Youth Choir (Grades 3-5)** – Joint rehearsals will be held every **Thursday** from 4:00-4:45 p.m. **AND** every **Friday** from 5:00-5:45 p.m. (please note that rehearsals are scheduled for 45 minutes); the same material will be covered in each consecutive rehearsal every week and participating youth can choose which rehearsal works best with their schedule; all Thursday rehearsals will be in the common room; for Friday rehearsals, the first Friday of every month will be in the sanctuary and all other Fridays will be in the common room
- **KidSing** (Age 5 through Grade 2) On hiatus; reactivation will be announced in the future

For adult choir information, please contact Brad Conner at bconner@uubedford.org. For youth choirs information, please contact Janet Welby at youthchoirs@uubedford.org

Special note: There will be no rehearsals between the Christmas and New Year holidays.

Youth Happenings

Senior Youth Group (High School)

SYG had a full November featuring signature gathering for the Rent Control ballot initiative and a church bake sale. We also hung out and played some fun games. In December we'll gear up for CityReach, do some more training with UU Mass Action, and celebrate the holidays.

Sunday Dec 7th - planning our clothing drive for our January City Reach trip, in our usual slot 11:30 am to 1 pm

Sunday Dec 14th - a UU Mass Action training in our usual slot 11:30 am to 1 pm

Sunday Dec 21st - we'll join the holiday sing along after service and then have our own little holiday party afterward

Sunday Dec 28th - NO SYG during the winter vacation

Faith Development for Children

The fall has been a season of growth and creativity for the Faith Development for Children (FDC) program, filled with exciting initiatives and opportunities for connection. We're thrilled to announce the launch of our updated Faith Dev. for Children website, now accessible via the church's main site! The site offers families a hub to explore our curriculum, register for programs, and access UU resources. Coming soon (12/1), an events page and calendar to share activities with the wider community.

Mark your calendars for **December 6th**! The Junior Youth Group (JYG) will serve hot chocolate that day at the annual Artisan Fair. Stop by, say hello, and grab a warm drink while supporting their efforts.

On **December 17th**, JYG will host their Holiday Party, featuring a lively Yankee Swap. We're excited to see the creative gifts youth bring to trade and win!

Lastly, thank you to everyone who joined our first **Food For Thought** event in November. It was a meaningful evening of intergenerational connection.

The next one is set for **January**, so stay tuned!

-Nathan Sellers

Vespers Services

Vespers will continue on the second Tuesday of the month, December 9th. Come join us for a short simple service of silence, song and sharing. We meet at 7 pm in the Bacon Room and all are welcome to find a moment of peace and comfort with us. You can also join by zoom.

Women's Book Group December Meeting

"The Serviceberry" subtitled "Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World" by Robin Wall Kimmerer (author of Braiding Sweetgrass) is the book we'll be talking about this month. The meeting will be Sunday, December 7 at 6 p.m. in the Common Room. It will be a potluck, so please bring a dish to share.

The Environmental Justice Committee will be hosting a Climate Cafe book discussion about the same book on Sunday, January 18th from 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. in the Bacon Room (after the service). Rev. Jamie will be facilitating that discussion.

There may be a few copies left to purchase at the church (\$12) and there are also three copies that are being lent out to read and return.

The schedule for the women's book group is:

Meeting Date	Book	Author
12/7/2025	The Serviceberry	Robin Wall Kimmerer
1/11/2026	Book Swap	
2/1/2026	Hidden In Plain Sight *	Julie Brill
3/8/2026	March	Geraldine Brooks
4/26/2026	The Emperor of Gladness	Ocean Vuong
5/17/2026	James	Percival Everett
6/14/2026	Book Selection for the following year	

* The author will be at the meeting.

First Parish Book Discussion Climate Café January 18 - Serviceberry

Join us for a Climate Café book discussion after the service on January 18, 11:30 - 12:15 pm, in the Bacon Room for a discussion on the book:

The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World By Robin Wall Kimmerer

The discussion, facilitated by Rev. Jamie, will be a hybrid event. The in-person location will be in the Bacon Room. The zoom link will be sent via ParishBiz closer to the event.

The Environmental Justice Committee "EJC" has several books left for purchase for \$12 (to pick up at church), and several "lending" books you may borrow to read and return. If interested to buy or borrow a book, please contact EJC at: environmental-justice@uubedford.org

Coordinated by the Environmental Justice Committee.

Discussion Group at Carleton Willard Village

Thursday, December 11 at 1pm: Carleton-Willard Discussion Forum with Rev. Jamie

Every second Thursday Rev. Jamie leads a discussion forum at Carleton-Willard Village on a topic of interest to Unitarian Universalists and hopefully everyone. The topic in December will be "Will the Real Christmas Please Stand Up?" We'll talk about the transformation of Christmas from disreputable carnival to cozy family holiday and how the Unitarians had a lot to do with this. And we'll talk about the meaning of the holiday season for us today.

Small Group at Carleton Willard Village

Small Group at Carleton Willard Village with Rev. Annie

We'll meet for our small group in the Bedford Room at 2 pm on Thursday December 18th.

Social Responsibility Council (SRC) Update

*I am forgotten.
Nobody misses me.
No calls, pictures or empathy.
I am forgotten.*

~ [Mary Ann Webb, Prison Journalism Project](#)



This time of year is one of gathering, reunion, and connection for some. For others, it's a time of isolation and heartache—even more so for those who are incarcerated and physically separated from their families, friends, communities, and the world outside the prison walls.

Come to the service on [Sunday, December 7](#), to learn about [Concord Prison Outreach's Holiday Gift Bag Project](#), which provides a bag of simple, useful gifts to each incarcerated individual in Concord's two state prisons. Each gift bag is a reminder to those inside the prison that they are not forgotten—that people “outside the walls” are thinking of their incarcerated neighbors and wishing them a better future, both while they are in prison and after release.

You can support the good work of this project by contributing to the Sunday offering on December 7 via cash/check or [online](#). (To contribute to your pledge instead of the Sunday offering, write the word “pledge” in your check’s memo field or select “Give to Pledge Payment” online.)

Do you know of another organization making a difference that you would like to support? We want to hear about it! [Propose a Share the Plate or grant recipient!](#)! Reach out to any SRC member or email socialresponsibility@uubedford.org and we will be glad to guide you.

~ *Heather Black on behalf of the Social Responsibility Council*

First Friday Potluck: December 5th

Please join us for the traditional First Friday Potluck Supper in the Common Room at the church. Attendees are asked to bring either an appetizer, main course or dessert for sharing. The meal begins at 6:00 PM with appetizers (BYOB: adult beverages and/or seltzer/juice/etc.). At 6:45, main courses will be served, with dessert at about 7:30.



Indoor Holiday Artisan's Fair: Saturday, Dec. 6th

On December 6th, the Gallery @First Parish and the Bedford Cultural District will again co-sponsor an **Indoor Holiday Artisan's Fair** which will be open to the public from **2:00 to 6:00**. Over 25 vendors with their handcrafted items will have their wares for sale in the Common Room and second-floor galleries. Some 25 vendors will be selling their unique, handmade items including paintings and photography, ceramics, jewelry, ornaments, candles, fabric and fiber crafts as well as candles, clothing, books and cutting boards and more.

Downstairs at First Parish, children can also get in on the shopping at the popular **Children's Fair from 2:00 to 4:30 p.m.** The fair will offer them free donated items to gift to others, complimentary gift wrapping, and materials for creative cardmaking for seniors. Potty-trained children can be dropped off from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. while their grownups shop at the Artisans Market. Optional cash donations will support the Bedford Food Pantry.

The joyful sounds of the First Parish choir will fill the church entryway from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. as early shoppers browse the two floors packed with artisans' tables. As the shopping continues, young Suzuki Method violinists, under the direction of Carlough Faulkner-Carroll, will play a selection of holiday favorites from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Join us for this fun event from 2-6pm on Saturday on December 6th. Please enter through the Elm Street door and enjoy the fun.

Preparing for Death...Why it Matters and How to Start

It is inevitable that each of us will die. No one is left out. In our culture, however, we tend to avoid talking about this life experience that touches us all. We may avoid taking time to clarify our values and wishes for end-of-life care and/or feel uncertain or anxious about sharing this information with family and friends. Yet this preparation and these brave conversations would be such a gift to ourselves and our loved ones and may increase our odds of having the kind of deaths we want. Have you given thought to your own wishes for end-of-life care? Are you unsure about how to even begin this process? Wondering how to have a conversation about your care wishes with loved ones? Are you caring for elderly parents or other loved ones who are ill or possibly facing death in the near future? If so, are you aware of their wishes?

Come learn about why this preparatory work is so important and how to begin doing it. FPB End of Life Doula, Maureen Richichi, will offer three sessions in January:

- Thursday, January 15, 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM in the Bacon Room
- Thursday, January 15, 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM Virtual Session Zoom Meeting
- Saturday, January 17, 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM in the Bacon Room.

All are welcome. Coffee/Tea will be available (those attending on Zoom please bring your own cup!). Registration is not required to attend but Maureen would appreciate knowing if you're planning on coming. Please contact Maureen with any questions or concerns. Stay tuned for the Zoom link via email.

Here Comes the Cookie Express!

Please watch for the train! The Lay Pastoral Care Team's annual Cookie Express is coming in mid-December. Cookie Express is First Parish's Holiday gift to Parishioners who may not be able to get to church- it's a lovely way for us to

connect with parishioners and bring a cheery gift.

We are looking for cookie bakers, packagers and deliverers - so watch Anno and Parish Biz for further details and Sign-up Geniuses - and do be in touch with Marge Heckman or Liz Connors if you have any questions - thank you!



Momentum on Stop Private Jet Expansion “SPJE” Faith Resolution

First Parish in Bedford was the first church to adopt the SPJE Faith Resolution opposing private jet expansion, followed by nine other faith groups. This month, two more faith communities adopted the resolution: St. Anne's in-the-Fields Episcopal Church Social Justice Commission in Lincoln and the First Parish Billerica UU. This brings the total to a dozen faith communities that adopted and sent the SPJE Faith Resolution to Governor Healey and other elected officials.

Together we have a moral imperative to act for a just and equitable transition for a livable climate and that expanding hangars for private jets is immoral and unconscionable. Clearly, adopting these resolutions is impactful and important!

Visit [SPJE's Faith Resolution web page](#) to see other faith communities who have adopted Resolutions, as well as our March 2025 Faith Resolution Webinar with Rev. Jamie Hinson-Rieger (Bedford First Parish UU) and Rev. Jim Antal (UCC).

The First Parish Public Witness Team reminds all that:

- Our weekly **Standout For Democracy** on the front of the Common has switched to Saturday mornings from 10 to 11 for the winter. It's turning into a community and a party! Cars beep for us like crazy. Signs available. Bring your flag.
- Our **NO KING** yard signs await your free pickup in the front entrance of the church. Courage is contagious!

-Alan MacRobert



From the Immigration Justice Team

Eighteen months ago an *Immigrant Families Support Fund* was set up at First Parish. It has helped families housed and cared for – both long and short-term – who were among the many homeless immigrants seeking a better future in Massachusetts.

From time to time we wish to remind our community of the existence of this fund. We need no reminder of the continuing struggles of these families that we wish to ease in the most basic ways.

Contributions should be made to the Immigration Family Support Fund by writing a check to:

First Parish Bedford
75 Great Road
Bedford, MA 01730

Capital Campaign Update

A post-service update on FPB's capital campaign was held on Nov 16 in the Bacon Room. 8+ candidate infrastructure upgrades for FPB to pursue were presented along with their cost estimates. Several of these potential improvements are technically complex and financially linked.

To inform long-range infrastructure planning & break fear-of-making-wrong-decision paralysis, FPB's Board recently approved hiring consulting firm GreenerU to perform a decarbonization study of key infrastructure projects. An architecture company, Studio NDP, will also analyze the church's existing physical condition & recommend options for Common Room egress. Consultant final reports are due before the special Feb 8 congregational "go/no-go" vote on the capital campaign.

UU consultant Sara Green also returned to Bedford last month to hold financial feasibility conversations with 25+ pledging units. Thanks to everyone who privately spoke with Sara about the capital campaign. We look forward to receiving Sara's report in December about how much campaign funding can realistically be raised.

These engineering and financial studies will likely yield various improvement options that FPB can undertake over the coming decade(s). Prioritizing among different upgrade plans ultimately depends on project urgency and community values. To assess FPB's priorities, GreenerU will run a workshop from **11:30 – 1:00 on Tues Dec 2 in Room 204**. Input will be sought from church committees and community members to guide campaign decision-making. All are welcome to join the workshop either in-person (with bagels!) or via Zoom

-Peter Cho, for the CCC

Women's Holiday Breakfast: Sat. Dec. 13, 2025 from 9:00-11:30AM!

The holidays can be a stressful time (especially for women....), but let's put all that aside and come enjoy each other's company for a merry potluck brunch in the Common Room at First Parish on Saturday Dec. 13, 2025!

This event will run from 9:00 AM through 11:30 AM. We'll provide coffee/tea/etc. and ask that you bring something to share for about 4-6 people. We'll have outlets for slow cookers if you are bringing anything that requires electricity.

We're also "crowd-sourcing" decorations so things will be nice and festive. If you're so inclined, please bring a decorative item that represents your favorite winter holiday/winter activity/or general winter "coziness" (and then also bring that

item back home with you when you leave the event.....). We also ask for help breaking down the tables/chairs/etc. at the end of the event....

We need to give First Parish a ballpark headcount, so if you plan to attend, please RSVP to me (Carla) at my personal email address (which I'll be sending via the Anno list) by Friday Dec. 5.

Hope to see many First Parish members and friends at this event!



Ferry Beach Retreat: SAVE THE DATE May 8-10, 2026

Our annual Mother's Day weekend retreat at [Ferry Beach](#) is a beloved long-time tradition at First Parish for attendees of all ages. Whether it's for both nights, one night, or just for the day on Saturday, come and talk, laugh, and relax with old friends and new!

New in 2026! We are adding some structured, supervised activities for kids on Saturday and Mother's Day Tea on the porch!

So mark your calendars for this relaxing weekend of building community and falling asleep to the sound of the ocean.

Registration begins in February, but your Ferry Beach team is already preparing for a great weekend. If you have an activity you would like to offer, please reach out to the office and Bob Doud, Activities Coordinator, will be in touch!

More info on our website: <https://uubedford.org/community-life/ferry-beach-retreat/>

First Parish Committees

2025-2026

Parish Board

Stacy Chandler, *President* (2027)
Mark Bailey (2028)
Bea Brunkhorst (2027)
Ted Carlson (2028)
Peter Cho (2026)
Susan Lincoln (2026)
Wendy Innis, *Treasurer* (2027)
Rev. Jamie Hinson-Rieger, *ex officio*
Rev. Annie Gonzalez, *ex officio*
Nathan Sellers, *ex officio*

Clerk: Rebecca Green Neale
Moderator: Bob Dorer

Leadership Team

Rev. Jamie Hinson-Rieger, *Sr. Minister*
Rev. Annie Gonzalez, *Min. of Faith Dev.*
Nathan Sellers, *Dir. of FD for Children*
Stacy Chandler, *Board President*
Bea Brunkhorst, *Parish Council Chair*
Wendy Innis, *Treasurer*
Brenda Rybicki, *Parish Administrator*

Parish Council

Bea Brunkhorst, *Chair*
Rev. Annie Gonzalez
Rev. Jamie Hinson-Rieger
Wendy Innis, *Treasurer*
[All Committee Chairs]

Social Responsibility Council

Moriah Tumbleson-Shaw,
Chair (2028)
Pam Foresman, *Treasurer* (2026)
Heather Black, *Communications Officer* (2028)
Doug Denny-Brown (2026)
John Laferriere (2026)
Jaclyn Olsen (2027)
Elise Randazzo (2027)

Nominating

Sarah Dorer (2027)
Jenn McClain (2028)
Dave Southard (2026)

Capital Campaign Committee

Peter Cho, *Chair*
Dan Bostwick
Joan Bowen
Brett Leida
Jenn McClain
Rev. Jamie Hinson-Rieger

Environmental Justice (EJC)

Ginny Steel, *Chair*
Corinne Doud (*rotating*)
Ginny Crocker
Bob McClatchey
Don MacIver
Sabrina McClain
Marjorie Roemer

Faith Development

Rev. Annie Gonzalez, *ex officio*
Nathan Sellers, *ex officio*

Children's FD Team

Christie Martin
Moriah Tumbleson-Shaw
Ian Carroll

Jr. Youth Team

Mark Bailey
Nora Bailey-Black (youth)
Nina Sonpal (youth)

Sr. Youth Team

Bob Doud
Jerry Ross
Carinna Dogan-West (youth)
Taelor Nichols (youth)
Nao Okamoto (youth)
Devin Sonpal (youth)

Adult FD Team

Randi Currier
Doug Muder
Jerry Ross

Finance

Wendy Innis, *Chair & Treasurer*
Vicki Gaw, *Asst. Treasurer*
Joan Bowen
Irene Gravina
Bill Rabinowitz
Jeff White

The Gallery@First Parish

Maria Green, *Co-Chair*
Doris Smith, *Co-Chair*
Bob Batt
Raquel Bauman
Stacy Chandler
Christine Dudley-Marling
Kati Oates
Chris Tohline
Christine Wojnar
Nancy Willett, *emeritus*

Hospitality

Cath Van Praagh, *Chair*
Carla Bradford
Kath McCafferty

Immigration Justice

Cecile Mercado, *Chair*
Christine Dudley-Marling
Debbie Flannery
Tom Flannery
Sabrina McClain
Luana Read
Ellen Scheiner
Anne Schmalz
Rev. Jamie Hinson-Rieger

Information Technology (IT)

Sandy Currier, *Chair, Lead Network*
Renu Bostwick, *Lead Workspace, Google Groups*
Craig Jackson, *Lead Website*

Worship Technology Team

Audio Team
Sandy Currier
Bob Dorer
Kath McCafferty
Natalie McClain
Bill Rabinowitz

Camera Team

Bob Bass
Bob Batt
John McClain
Chris Tohline

Video/Zoom Team

Em Bradford
Paul Bradford
Craig Jackson
Cecile Mercado
Cath Van Praagh

Interiors Committee

Erin Dorr, *Chair*
Carlough Faulkner-Carroll

Lay Pastoral Care

Liz Connors, *Chair*
Carol Epple
Clinton Fuller
Marge Heckman
Anita Raj
Art Smith
Rev. Jamie Hinson-Rieger

Membership

TBA, *Chair*

Outreach Team

Em Bradford
Joanne Glover
Benji Linden
Natalie McClain
Deb Picciuto
Chris Tohline
Rev. Jamie Hinson-Rieger, *Staff Liaison*

Pathway to Membership Team

Sharon McDonald
Doug Muder
Dave Southard
Rev. Annie Gonzalez, *Staff Liaison*

Sustaining Membership Team

Jenn McClain
Sandy Boczenowski
Carla Bradford
Rev. Jamie Hinson-Rieger, *Staff Liaison*

Music

Lisa Tohline, *Co-Chair*
Sara Angus
Dot Bergin
Mike Boczenowski
Bea Brunkhorst
Nancy Daugherty
Carol Epple
Karen Frederick
Dean Groves
Cynthia Mork
Bill Rasschaert
Luana Read
Chris Tohline
Lee Vorderer
Brad Conner, *ex officio*
Sandra LaBarge-Neumann, *ex officio*

Partner Church

Sharon McDonald, *Chair*
Dorothy Africa
Bea Brunkhorst
Brad Connor
Nancy Daugherty
Rich Daugherty
Sarah Dorer
Marge Heckman
Dorothy Johnson
Ben Sears
Ron & Cathy Cordes, *emeritus*

Personnel

Carol Gregory, *Chair*
Bob Dorer
Ed Schwartz

Physical Plant

Joel Parks, *Chair*
Bob Dorer
Brett Leida
John McClain
Christine Rabinowitz, *Parsonage*

Stewardship

Sarah Dorer, *Co-Chair*
Bill Rabinowitz, *Co-Chair*
Irene Gravina
Linda Pollitz
Rev. Jamie Hinson-Rieger, *ex officio*

AD HOC, TASK FORCES & TEAMS

Council on Ministry Team

Ian Carroll
Sharon McDonald
Kiya Nicoll
Joe Pompei

Fundraising Teams

Auction
Peter Cho, *Chair*
Erin Dorr
Rebecca Green Neale
Gene Kalb
Linda Politz
Clayton Springer
Cath Van Praagh

Plant & Craft Fair

Dorothy Africa, *Co-Chair*
Bea Brunkhorst, *Co-Chair*

Chili Cook-Off
Linda Pollitz
Gene Kalb

Memorials Task Force

Carla Bradford, *Chair*
Kath McCafferty
Wendy Innis
Rich Suval

UU Urban Ministry Delegates

Cecile Mercado
Robert Schmalz

Worship Associates Team

Jenn McClain, *Chair*
Ian Carroll
Marya Dantzer
Ron Green
Doug Muder
Joe Pompei
Rich Suval



First Parish Music Committee

Concert Calendar 2025–2026

First Parish in Bedford, Unitarian Universalist • 75 The Great Road • Bedford, MA 01730

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!



CHRISTMAS WITH THE BACK BAY RINGERS



2:00 PM Saturday, December 13, 2025



16th Annual VALENTINE'S CONCERT & CHOCOLATE RECEPTION



4:00 PM Sunday, February 8, 2026



5th Annual IRISH CELEBRATION ◆ FAMILY EVENT

◆ 5:00 PM Saturday, March 14, 2026

CONCERT featuring Valerie Anastasio, soprano and Steve Sussman, piano



3:00 PM Sunday, April 26, 2026

3rd Annual EVENING OF JAZZ DATE & TIME TBD

www.uubedford.org • 781-275-7994



First Parish is
Wheelchair Accessible



First Parish Music Committee
presents



Christmas with the back bay ringers



**Saturday,
December 13, 2025
2:00 PM**

TICKETS

\$25 for Adults

\$20 for Seniors/Students/Children age 6-12

Tickets can be purchased at the door
or at
www.backbayringers.org

First Parish in Bedford, Unitarian Universalist
75 The Great Road (Rts 4 / 62/ 225)
Church office: 781-275-7994
www.uubedford.org



First Parish is
Wheelchair Accessible