



The Parishioner

News of the First Parish in Bedford

Unitarian Universalist

On the Common, Bedford, Massachusetts

Spirit...Justice...Community

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Nathan Sellers, director of faith development for children

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Upcoming Sunday Services*

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

Our February theme is "Hope is about winning the imagination battle."

Sunday, February 1st

Title: "Minneapolis, Part Two" (*Led by Rev. Jamie*)

Rev. Jamie will share further reflections on his experience in Minneapolis.

Sunday, February 8th

Title: "Making Our Dreams a Reality" (*Led by the Worship Team*)

Join us for an all-ages service, featuring the youth and adult choirs, Steve Sussman on piano, and a special flute performance by one of our youth. As UUs we dream big dreams. How can we take small steps to make our dreams a reality?

Sunday, February 15th

Title: "Give Them Not Hell, But Hope" (*Led by Rev. Annie*)

When things are most dire, it becomes even more vital to hold fast to dreams about what actually can be. While fear is a strong motivator, hope is better suited for the changes we want to see in the world. We'll talk about misquoted Universalists, divisive politicians, and daring to be unrealistic in our visions while staying pragmatic in our strategies.

Sunday, February 22nd

Title: "Awe and Everyday Wonder" (*Led by Rev. Jo Murphy*)

In his book "Awe: The New Science of Everyday Wonder", Dachner Keltner, a psychology scholar, defines "awe" as "the feeling of being in the presence of something vast that transcends your current understanding of the world." In my experience, "awe" is a concept not often felt by UU's. We greatly value logic, rationality, and critical thinking, which though important, can sometimes block our ability to experience "awe." Being less familiar with awe blocks our ability to be open to miracles and wonder, and isn't this a moment where we could really use a miracle? Where could we learn and expand our imagination through "transcending our current understanding of the world?" Let us explore this and allow ourselves to feel awe and allow it to lead us to a world much more just and wonder filled than the one we currently live in.

Rev. Jo Murphy is the executive director of UU Mass Action.

| | |
|--|---|
| Ferry Beach: Save the Date! 14 | |
| WARRANT 15 | |
| FP Committees 16 | |
| Music Committee Events 18 | |
| Valentine's Concert 19 | |
| Next deadline is Feb. 23rd | 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,

By the time you are reading this, we will have had our last major presentation on the capital campaign and be very near a vote. As I return from my time in Minneapolis, and am still processing, I am reflecting on the February worship theme: "Hope is about winning the imagination battle." This is a line I love from author and organizer Adrienne Maree Brown. She writes that we are in an imagination battle for our shared future. The situation in Minneapolis presents such a stark example of two differently imagined futures for our country, one based on control and violence, and one based on community and care. Similarly, our Unitarian Universalist values offer an imagined way that we could all be in community and an imagined world that we could create together. Those values and that vision are more important than ever.

This brought me back to a question that has been raised about the capital campaign and that I have also asked myself—with the world in the state it is in, should we devote these resources to the future of our own church? Then I think about how the world is always in some kind of state, and about all the upheavals this congregation has lived through in its almost 300 years of history. Yes, it feels like our country is as polarized as it's ever been. But this church survived an actual civil war. This church went through two world wars, the Spanish flu, the Great Depression, all the upheavals of Vietnam and the Civil Rights era, 09-11, and COVID. Just to name a few! Through it all, it has remained standing. We are here today because people chose to invest in the church through all those tumultuous times. We have the great comfort, support, and inspiration of First Parish in these trying times, because others sustained it in their own trying times.

For myself, personally, I want to know that First Parish will be here, still carrying the torch of liberalism, still serving as a beacon of love and justice and compassion, thirty years from now, fifty years from now, three hundred years from now. Whatever challenges we are currently facing, there will be a time beyond them, and our task is to cast a vision through. Future generations will face their own challenges, perhaps greater than ours, and I want the shining light of First Parish to be there, still imagining a world centered in love and care. First Parish gives me hope in these challenging times. Investing in its great future feels like an act of hope as well.

Peace, Jamie

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jamie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the "J" and "a" being particularly prominent.

Parish Board Notes

On Friday, January 23, I drove a packed carload of donated clothes to the Cathedral Church of St. Paul on Tremont Street in Boston. Seventeen First Parish youth met me at the curb and carried it all inside. It was their contribution to the [CityReach](#) program they were to engage in for the next 20 hours.

Seeing our youth taking action in the moment and committing to their learning and involvement gave me hope. Hope that, if we all just keep connecting, learning, and moving forward with empathetic action in our own neighborhoods, we can have a ripple effect that can reach as far as Lewiston, Portland, and the Twin Cities.

Connecting with our UU siblings and other faith communities is a way to keep our inspirational chalice burning, too. In that vein, I invite you to consider engaging with our [upcoming General Assembly](#) in June. Though largely virtual this year, there will be opportunities to connect locally while engaging in either business meetings as a delegate or in the open workshops and worship. At our January 21 board meeting, we voted to offer to cover fees for 3 delegates at the early bird rate and deadline of April 30, encouraging senior youth to attend. Look for a more detailed email via ParishBiz, but feel free to talk with Rev. Jamie or Rev. Annie to learn more about the GA experience.

The approved December 2025 Board minutes can be read [here](#).

In peace, Stacy

Office Matters

By the time this issue is published, we could be on the verge of our second major snowstorm this month. **As a reminder, please remember to stay tuned to WBZ news and ParishBiz for any closing or delay announcements.**

As we kick off February, we have many fun (and tasty) events to help us get through the chill of winter. The First Friday Potluck will be on Friday, Feb. 6th at 6PM in the Common Room. Then, just in time to polish up your Superbowl recipes, we have the 15th Annual Chili Cook-Off on Saturday, Feb. 7th at 6PM in the Common Room. After the Special Meeting of the Congregation on Sunday, Feb. 8th, the Partner Church Committee will hold a baked potato fundraiser during coffee hour, followed by the 16th Annual Valentine's Concert at 4PM in the Sanctuary. And, there will be a chocolate reception afterwards! As always, please be sure to read further in this newsletter and visit the main [Calendar](#) to see all of our upcoming activities.

***REMINDER: Pledge Payments**....our 2025/2026 Stewardship campaign is halfway over. 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 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. **Year-end giving statements have all been mailed out.**

***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 me 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

“... Imagine all the people living life in peace. You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one. I hope someday you'll join us and the world will be as one....”

– from the song "Imagine" (1971) by John Lennon, (1940-1980), Co-Lead Vocalist and Rhythm Guitarist for "The Beatles", songwriter and activist

Here's the planned music for 10 a.m. services in the upcoming month –

Sunday, February 1st: Sandra LaBarge-Neumann will be playing organ and piano. Sandra will be joined by Nao Okamoto on violin playing "The Lover's Waltz" by Jay Unger and Molly Mason. She will also play "Morning Invocation" by David Paxton and Robert Lowry's "Shall We Gather at the River" (Hanson Place) arranged by Joe Utterback.

Sunday, February 8th: Steve Sussman will be playing piano. Janet Welby and the First Parish youth choirs will sing Alan Menken's "A Whole New World" from "Aladdin" joined by the adult choir. Kat Nicoll will be playing flute for the prelude.

Sunday, February 15th: Catherine Stornetta will be playing piano. The adult choir will sing John Lennon's beloved song, "Imagine", and Leslie Bricusse's magical song, "Pure Imagination". Catherine will be playing selections from J.S. Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* (Book 1).

Sunday, February 22nd: Steve Sussman will be playing piano.

Be sure to **mark your calendars** for the upcoming **16th Annual Valentine's concert** and chocolate reception sponsored by the Music Committee on **Sunday, February 8, 2026 at 4 p.m.** Check out the flyer elsewhere in this bulletin.

More details about both events will follow in the coming weeks. And, don't worry, the concert will be over in plenty of time to get home and watch the Super Bowl.

Maybe it's time for you to think about joining the adult choir? If you're interested, e-mail me at bconner@uubedford.org. Besides always having fun and 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 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

Youth Happenings

Senior Youth Group (High School)

SYG had a January that included our big CityReach trip with 17 youth attending. Big gratitude to all who donated clothes, drove our youth into the city, and especially to our overnight leaders Bob Doud, Mark Bailey and Dorothy Anderons-Perales.

Sunday Feb 1st- 12 pm - 6 pm "Adventures for Justice" outing for a workshop on housing justice and some quests at Boda Borg

Sunday Feb 8th - 11:30 am - 1 pm regular SYG session with discussion, games, and a short field trip to the Capital Campaign vote

Sunday Feb 15th - NO SYG due to Feb break

Sunday Feb 22nd - 11:30 am - 1 pm regular SYG session with games and planning for future events like a Bake Off or going to Household Goods

Faith Development for Children

We're excited to share what's coming up in February 2026 for our children and youth faith development programs!

Junior Youth Group (JYG) – Wednesdays in February

JYG will continue to meet on Wednesday afternoons 3:30 PM - 5 PM throughout the month, with each week offering something a little different:

- February 4 – Large Group Game Night
A fun, high-energy gathering to kick off the month together.
- February 11 – Community Service Activity
Junior Youth will partner with the Bedford Community Table Pantry to support our neighbors and learn about food justice.
- February 18 – NO JYG / SCHOOL BREAK
- February 25 – JYG Bake-Off
A friendly (and delicious!) bake-off competition between Junior Youth members.

Sunday Morning Programs (Beginning February 1)

- Building Bridges returns on Sundays at 10:00 AM, with a new unit exploring Hinduism.
- Children's Faith Development (K-5) will begin a new curriculum centered on UU Values, designed to help our youngest members explore what it means to live our faith in everyday life.

8th Grade UUnited Workshops

Our 8th graders will gather for UUnited workshops on February 1 and February 22. Both sessions will focus on immigration justice, offering space for learning, reflection, and meaningful conversation.

We're looking forward to a month filled with connection, learning, service, and joy. As always, we're grateful to our families, volunteers, and youth for making this community so vibrant.

-Nathan Sellers, Director of Faith Development for Children

Bedford Lyceum

Sunday (February 1) before church, Bedford town historian Sharon McDonald will speak at the Bedford Lyceum about her lifelong relationship with history. She has picked the title "Door Number Two: Historian" and promises to include "a few props and a song or two".

Those of us who have been at First Parish for some while know Sharon as a fascinating person and an engaging speaker. If you are new or for some reason haven't crossed paths with Sharon yet, consider this an opportunity.

Lyceums take place in the Common Room on the first Sunday of every month, begin at 9 a.m., and conclude in time for everyone to attend the Sunday service.



Vespers Services

Vespers will continue on the second Tuesday of the month, February 10th. 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.

Gallery @First Parish

The Gallery Committee at First Parish is proud to announce our newest exhibit which features uplifting art by experienced artists from the Bedford Arts and Crafts Society.

Founded in 1956, the Bedford Arts and Crafts Society (BACS) is dedicated to promoting appreciation and enjoyment of fine art and crafts. From an initial membership of three, the group has grown to more than eighty members from Bedford, Massachusetts, and surrounding towns.

This new show was recently installed and will be on display through March 27th. Please join us for our opening reception in the gallery on Sunday, February 15 from 11:30 to 1:30. You will be delighted by the wonderful art created by this active art group.

- Come and enjoy not only the fascinating art, but also tasty refreshments along with music provided by popular musician, Dean Groves.
- Among the many pieces of art you can view is a haunting painting by Namrata Siviya titled "Self, Excavated". Namrata is the owner of the local Purple Pencil art studio. Learn about the art process called wet cyanotype from Maria Green. Her art piece using this process, titled "Innocence", was recently in the 26th Annual Frances N. Roddy show at the Concord Art Association. For those of you who enjoy a walk at sunset, you will not want to miss the acrylic painting titled "A Sunset Through the Trees" by Judi Babcock.

Women's Book Group

Please join us on Sunday, February 1 to meet Julie Brill, the author of "Hidden in Plain Sight, A Family Memoir and the Untold Story of the Holocaust in Serbia". Julie lives in Bedford and will join us for a potluck dinner and discussion of her book.

The meeting starts at 6 p.m. in the Common Room.

The book group schedule for the remaining church year is:

| Meeting Date | Book | Author |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| 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 | |

* Author will join us.

SRC Update

"Rise Above's support in renting his trumpet for him so that he can use his music to work through some of the trauma of his childhood is very appreciated ... His new interest in music is great therapy in helping him deal with all the changes that have happened over the past few years. He also has become more outgoing playing in concerts or recitals ... Your support has changed his life." ~ Foster parent

Growing up isn't easy for anyone, but youth in foster care face additional challenges stemming from abuse and neglect, including social, academic, and physical and mental health struggles. Access to activities like sports and the arts nurtures the well-being of foster youth and helps reduce the risk of medical problems, depression, anxiety, PTSD, and substance abuse after leaving care. Unfortunately, cost is frequently a barrier to access.

[Rise Above](#), our February Share the Plate recipient, provides Massachusetts children in foster care with enriching activities, opportunities, and experiences that would be otherwise unaffordable. One of its partners in providing musical instrument lessons is Leonard's Music in Bedford. You can learn more about Rise Above at the service on Sunday, February 1.

You can support its good work by contributing to the Sunday collection on February 1 via cash/check or [online](#) by selecting "Give to Sunday Collection" from the dropdown. (To contribute to your pledge instead of the Sunday collection, write the word "pledge" in your check's memo field or select "Give to Pledge Payment" online.) Funding for Rise Above received from the Share the Plate program will go toward fulfilling requests made by eligible youth.

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



Partner Church News

Partner Church News: Baked Potato Fundraiser – Sunday, February 8th

We know you have been waiting all year for our popular baked potato fundraiser and it is coming right up! Annually for almost 30 years, FPB has sent money to our partner village in Transylvania to help kids attending school. Money raised from this event goes directly toward funding scholarships for children in Abásfalva. So, bring your appetite and grab a potato for lunch before you head in to cast your vote on the capital campaign!

This is also the time of year when the Partner Church Committee is collecting additional donations for the scholarship fund. If you would like to make an additional donation, please donate what you can by writing a check to First Parish in Bedford with "Transylvania Scholarship" on the memo line. Your generosity is much appreciated.

Looking forward to seeing you on the 8th!

-Marge Heckman for the Partner Church Committee

UU 101: Sunday, Feb. 15th

UU 101: Sunday Feb 15th 11:30 am - 1:30 pm Room 204 / Zoom

New to Unitarian Universalism or just wanting a bit of a refresher on where we come from, how we're organized and what we believe? Join Rev Annie, Doug Muder and Sharon McDonald for a little history, a little governance and a little bit of UU values. Lunch provided for in person attendees. Please RSVP at form sent out via ParishBiz by Rev. Annie.

EJC Events

Sunday February 22nd @ 2pm: In Conversation with Chuck Collins about his new book

Join us In Conversation with Chuck Collins about his new book: ***Burned by Billionaires: How Concentrated Wealth and Power Are Ruining Our Lives and Planet*** (published Oct 2025) & how it informs our fight to stop the proposed private jet expansion at Hanscom or Anywhere. Chuck Collins directs the Program on Inequality and the Common Good at the Institute for Policy Studies. The interview is by Diane Proctor, League of Women Voters Concord-Carlisle, and a Q&A will follow the interview.

This is a hybrid event and the in-person portion will be at the Concord Public Library. [Click here](#) for more information and to register.

The First Parish in Bedford Environmental Justice Committee is a co-sponsor, along with a growing list of additional co-sponsors, of this event. [For the sharable flyer click here](#)

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Wed. March 4th, 7pm: Tree Webinar with Dr. William Moomaw

Join us for a webinar with Nobel Prize recipient Dr. Moomaw on the irreplaceable value of mature trees and implications for the fight to stop the proposed jet expansion at Hanscom where 20 acres of mature trees are threatened. To register & for more information, [click here](#)

The First Parish in Bedford Environmental Justice Committee is a co-sponsor, along with a growing list of additional co-sponsors, of this event. [For a shareable flyer, click here](#)

-Coordinated by the Environmental Justice Committee



Discussion Group at Carleton Willard Village

Carleton-Willard Discussion Forum with Rev. Jamie

The next meeting of the discussion forum at Carleton-Willard Village is Thursday, February 12 (every second Thursday) at 1pm. The topic in February will be dreams and inspiration.

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 February 19th.

Circle Suppers 2026!

Circle Suppers are a great way to get to know some of your fellow parishioners and other friends in small potluck-type gatherings. Volunteers offer to host guests at their homes and make the main meal: their guests then provide other parts of the meal (appetizer, dessert, etc.).

Signups for those interested in hosting and/or attending Circle Suppers will take place at Community Hour in the Common Room on Feb. 8 and Feb. 15. The deadline to sign up is Tues. Feb. 24. We hope to host at least three Circle Suppers on the evening of Mar. 7. You can sign up for Circle Suppers at these Community Hour dates, or can request a signup form or more information about these congenial events via the Anno list.

Those who volunteer to host are always greatly appreciated!

First Friday Potluck: Fri. Feb. 6, 2026

Please join us for the "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. Also, if you plan to have any alcoholic drinks, please bring them with you. We had a shortage of wine/beer, etc. and last month's event. Thank you!



Preparing for Death...Dying Matters: "Documents 101 for End-of-Life Healthcare"

No one relishes considering their dying and death yet the benefits of early end-of-life discussions and doing advance healthcare planning are significant. Communicating and formalizing your wishes for care increases your autonomy, promotes shared decision-making in accordance with your values and medical care preferences, and avoids unwanted and unnecessary medical treatments. It is a profound gift to yourself, your family and other loved ones.

The second session in our Dying Matters series this church year will focus on information and guidance about important healthcare documents:

- MA Health Care Proxy (form designating someone to make decisions for you in the event you are unable to do so).
- Personal Directive for End-of-Life Care Wishes
- MA POLST Form (portable medical orders determined by you and your physician about specific treatments you want/don't want in a medical emergency)
- DNR Form (Do Not Resuscitate medical order).

I'll have samples of these forms and copies of multiple Personal Directive options for us to review and discuss. And I'll provide a resource list of websites for accessing all forms.

Again, there are three opportunities for you to join the same session.

Tuesday, 2/24 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM - Rm. 204

Tuesday 2/24 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM – Virtual session via ZOOM

<https://zoom.us/j/92818937952?pwd=Sb2OLovAe3MGSefsSGIvFxfNvMKkWI.1>

Meeting ID: 928 1893 7952

Passcode: 614820

One tap mobile +13017158592,,92818937952#

By phone 1-301-715-8592

Saturday 2/28 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM - Rm. 204

Please RSVP directly to me, if possible, so that I can be sure to have room space and enough handouts for all attendees.

Maureen Richichi, End-of-Life Doula

The First Parish Public Witness Team

Our weekly **Standout For Democracy** on the front of the Common is happening all winter, Saturday mornings from 10 to 11. Regardless of the weather! It has become a community and sometimes a party with music! Cars beep for us like crazy. Signs available. Bring your flag.

-Alan MacRobert



Capital Campaign Update

Over the past 18 months, FPB has thoughtfully considered its physical infrastructure needs over the coming decades. Meetings have been held, surveys have been conducted, and consultants have been engaged. A strong consensus has emerged that our community needs to conduct a capital campaign to fund several major projects. Such core and costly work simply cannot be covered by FPB's annual operating budget.

Infrastructure projects targeted by the campaign fall into three broad categories. Firstly, "legacy" repairs (e.g. HVAC overhaul, fire suppression, power backup) will protect the physical safety of the church building and its occupants. Secondly, "community & inclusion" work promotes church culture (e.g. organ music, kitchen operation) and accessibility (e.g. common room egress, acoustic enhancements).

Finally, "sustainability" projects (e.g. decarbonization via lighting/window improvements & decreased fossil fuel use) will significantly improve FPB's relationship with the environment.

A special congregational meeting is scheduled for Feb 8, 2026 in the sanctuary following that Sunday's service. (The zoom link listed below can be used to virtually participate.) After a high-level overview, we will vote on a single resolution to launch a \$1.5M capital campaign in spring 2026.

If approved, the campaign will run in parallel with the annual stewardship drive from mid-March to late April. Capital campaign funds will subsequently be collected during 2026-2029 to pay for basic infrastructure needs. The resulting physical improvements will benefit current and future FPB generations for decades to come...

Topic: Special Meeting of the Congregation

Time: Feb 8, 2026 11:45 AM Eastern Time

<https://zoom.us/j/95942597538?pwd=SaeledcFwj9PbhateuiqM2Rgs94uNu.1>

The Chili Cook-Off is Saturday, Feb. 7th!

15th Annual First Parish Chili Cook-Off – Saturday, February 7, 2026 - SEE YOU THERE!

This wonderful First Parish intergenerational event will take place in the Common Room on Saturday, February 7, 2026. Bring family, friends, and your appetite! And if you're feeling competitive, enter your favorite pot of chili!

JUST THE FACTS

What: First Parish Chili Cook-Off

When: Saturday Feb 7th, 6:0pm to 8:00ish

Where: Common Room at the Church

Who: Chili cooks and fans of all ages

How much: suggested donation \$10/person, \$25/family

More info gene.kalb@gmail.com or linda.pollitz@gmail.com



First Parish Chili Cook Off

More information, contact Gene Kalb or Linda Pollitz at committees@uubedford.org

Auction Catalog Opening!

FPB's 2026 Auction will be held on the evening of Saturday, March 28. The catalog opens on Sunday, Feb 1. A link to the auction webpage is posted on FPB's website. And the 2026 catalog is accessible on any device via any browser at FirstParishBedford.auctria.events.

Everyone is invited to offer Art, Edibles, Events, Getaways, Services and much more for this year's auction. This annual springtime event is always fun and festive. But it depends on many generous donations of Talents, Treasures and Time from the entire FPB community. So check out the catalog and mark March 28 on your calendars for this year's auction!

What should I donate?
What do you enjoy?

SERVICES:

- Donate your time! Yard work, massage, gardening, painting, fix-it work, tutoring or organization...
- Teach us something! Yoga, sewing, pickleball, baking, or local tours...

EVENTS:

- Group dinners and themed events are extremely popular! Host a gathering focussed on your favorite cuisine or topic of interest. Everyone loves a fun event!

PLACES:

- Time in vacation homes, beloved B&Bs, or on your boat... People love to get away!

ITEMS:

- Handcrafts - jewelry, woodcraft, quilts, knitwear, art, pottery and photography... What have you been making?
- Lovely items in very good condition that need a new home will be appreciated by others!
- Gift baskets, gift certificates or event tickets; donate for people who will enjoy them!

CUISINE:

- Your signature baked goods, favorite dish, jam, brew or liqueur can be offered that night or for later delivery... What recipes have you been working on?

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 mid-February. I (Carla) be available to answer any questions you may have regarding this very fun intergenerational event beginning g on Feb. 15 in the Common Room after the service. 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/>

THE WARRANT

THE FIRST PARISH IN BEDFORD, UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
BEDFORD, MIDDLESEX COUNTY, COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MIDDLESEX SS:

To the Clerk, First Parish in Bedford

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts you are hereby authorized and instructed to notify the legal voters of said First Parish in Bedford in the County of Middlesex to meet at the Meeting House of said Parish on Sunday, the 8th day of February 2026, at eleven-forty-five o'clock in the morning and then and there to act on the following articles, viz:

I. To appoint a Minutes Committee. This group of three people will be responsible for reviewing the Clerk's minutes of the meeting in a timely manner, prior to being presented for a vote by the parish.

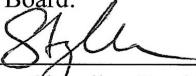
II. To see what action the Parish will take in support of the launch of a capital campaign from March 15, 2026 - April 25, 2026 with the aim of raising a minimum of \$1.5 million to fund a variety of major long-term infrastructure improvements over the course of three years as recommended by the capital campaign committee with input from the greater congregation.

III. To act upon such other matters as shall be deemed appropriate by the Moderator under the provisions of the by-laws.

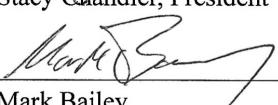
You are directed to serve this Warrant by posting an attested copy thereof at the Meeting House eight days, including two Sundays, before the 8th day of February 2026 and to return this warrant with your doings thereon at said meeting.

Witness our hands this 21st day of January in the year 2026.

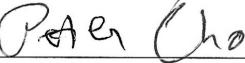
The Parish Board:



Stacy Chandler, President



Mark Bailey



Peter Cho

Approved via email.

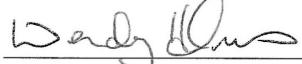
Robert T. Carlson



Bea Brunkhorst



Susan Lincoln



Wendy Innis, Treasurer

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*
Joan Bowen
Bob Dorer
Tom Flannery
Gene Kalb
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
Paul Vancutsem

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



THE 16TH ANNUAL

Valentine's Day Concert

Sunday, February 8, 2026 at 4:00 PM

THIS HEART OF MINE –
THE SONGS OF HARRY WARREN
and virtuosic romantic violin masterpieces



Featuring: Bradford Conner (*piano*)
Cynthia Mork & Ben Sears (*vocals*)



Haig Hovsepian (*violin*)
Ani Hovsepian (*piano*)



Chocolate Reception after the Show!

Net proceeds to benefit First Parish in Bedford

Suggested Donations

(gratefully accepted at the door)

\$20 for Adults • \$15 for Seniors/Students



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www.uubedford.org • 781-275-7994

First Parish is Wheelchair Accessible

