



The Parishioner

News of the First Parish in Bedford

Unitarian Universalist

On the Common, Bedford, Massachusetts

Spirit...Justice...Community

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March 2026

Rev. Jamie Hinson-Rieger, senior minister
Rev. Annie Gonzalez, minister of faith development
Nathan Sellers, director of faith development for children
Stacy Chandler, parish board president
Rev. John Gibbons, minister emeritus

Carla Bradford, editor
Bradford Conner, music/choir director
Janet Welby, acting youth choir director
Sandra LaBarge-Neumann, organist
Brenda Rybicki, parish administrator
Claudia Brooks, interim assistant administrator
Joe Mitchell, sexton/custodian

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Upcoming Sunday Services*

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

Our March theme is "Hope is a verb!" We will explore ways that hope invites us to action, creativity, and transformation, and is in turn born out of all these things.

Sunday, March 1st

Title: "Call and Response: Process Theology, Hope, and One Tiny Barking Dog" (Led by Rev. Jamie)

Process theology is a school of theology that imagines that the universe and the divine future are engaged in a kind of dance of call and response, where in each moment the "divine" (understood in many different ways) invites us into a more creative and hope-filled future and we in turn have the choice to accept the invitation (or not!). What would it be like to live as though each moment contained an entryway into a more hopeful future? What if we can't find that entryway? And what does any of this have to do with a little yappy dog?

Sunday, March 8th *Don't forget to set your clocks forward!* 

Title: "International Women's Day Service" (Led by Eileen Campbell)

The second Sunday in March is our traditional lay-led International Women's Day service. This year we are happy to welcome guest speaker, Eileen Campbell, Global Vice President of Advocacy and Survivor Leadership at International Justice Mission. Around the world, children, women, and men living in poverty are being exploited by traffickers and violent abusers who use power and violence to take advantage of their vulnerability. IJM partners with local authorities and community leaders to protect people in poverty from violence, strengthen justice systems, and support survivors as they rebuild their lives with dignity and strength. This Sunday is also our Share the Plate Sunday in support of IJM's work. Join us to hear about survivors who are courageously leading change and organizing to keep their communities safe and learn about how our congregation can be part of a global movement to end violence and exploitation. The choir will also be singing and there will be a special performance by Liz Connors (clarinet) and Carol Eppele (flute.)

Sunday, March 15th

Title: "Tea Parties and Mud Ball: Stewardship Sunday Service" (Led by Rev. Jamie)

UU Congregations are voluntary associations, volunteer led and (primarily) volunteer run. First Parish exists because of all the ways this community dreams it into being and then makes those dreams a reality. It is a labor of love, made possible by the generosity of everyone who contributes their time, energy, talent, and resources. And, in truth, there is a lot to do. As a newcomer, it can feel a little overwhelming, but for longtime members too. Are we doing too much? Are we doing too little? How do we find our own piece of the puzzle? What if we're ready for a change? Join us for a service that celebrates generosity and encourages us to also find the

thing that enriches us the most. This Stewardship Sunday service is the kickoff to our pledge drive and capital campaign.

Sunday, March 22nd

Title: "It Matters What We Do" (All Ages Service Led by the Worship Team)

UU is a humanist religious tradition that teaches that ultimately the nature of our lives and our world is up to us. We are free to make choices, and the choices we make really matter. This is exciting and also sometimes a lot! How do we deal with this level of responsibility and how do we make choices that lead to more hope for all of us? This fun and engaging all-ages service will be led by Rev. Jamie and Rev. Annie with participation by our Senior Youth Group, featuring the youth choirs and a reflection by Rev. Annie.

Sunday, March 29th

Title: "On Loneliness" (Led by Rev. Jamie)

America is by many measures a lonely country these days. Our former Surgeon General even spoke of a loneliness epidemic. People experience the challenge of loneliness in different ways at different ages and stages of life. How can people recognize the signs of growing loneliness and take steps to address it, and how can we help build opportunities for connection?

This Sunday the choir will sing "No One is Alone" and "Stand by Me." We will also honor Transgender Day of Visibility, which is March 31.

Next deadline is Mar. 30th

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,

As I write this, the sound and fury of the blizzard has given way to a beautiful and sunny winter's day. The snow-blanketed world feels peaceful and innocent. I hope you are all safe and well, wherever you are, as the storm hit quite differently in different locations. And I hope you are enjoying some peace and beauty in this day. Rev. Jo in her sermon this past Sunday, talked about the restorative powers of wonder and awe. In the experience of reverence for beauty, there is a kind of healing we all need. Maybe there is music playing wherever you are today. Maybe there is sparkling conversation. Maybe there is quiet coziness and winter light reflecting on the wall beside you. One of my favorite poets, Ross Gay (in Bloomington, Indiana!) writes in *The Book of (More) Delights*, "There are so many simple pleasures, simple delights, and maybe the goal, the practice, is to be especially delighted by them." I am wishing you some simple delight, some experience of beauty today.

March is a busy month at First Parish, with many things going on. There will be a Sunday Lyceum, a Friday Night Pot-Luck (with karaoke!) and an Irish Fest concert, a Food for Thought, a Quiche and Tell, a No Kings Rally and a Service Auction(!), and that is just a part of it. Somewhere in the middle we are launching our stewardship drive and the capital campaign. These are all wonderful opportunities for connection and service and to support the community.

Appropriately, our monthly service theme is "Hope is a verb," encouraging action and creativity. There will be many opportunities to verb your favorite verb in March. As always, I encourage you amidst the busyness to make time for rest and peace and simple delights. First Parish is above all a place for us to nourish our souls. Thank you in advance for all your gifts to the community, including first and foremost just the gift of your presence.

In gratitude,
Jamie



Parish Board Notes

Clocks spring ahead on March 8 and the spring equinox arrives on March 20, but I'm writing this as a classic Nor'easter blizzard is on our doorstep. While I'll love the snow and the chance to ski, I'll also be glad to spy my first crocus!

March also marks the launch of two big fundraisers for the church, both beginning on March 15! At our February 8 special congregational meeting, we unanimously voted to launch our Capital Campaign to raise at least \$1.5 million dollars over the next three years. And on February 18, after reviewing a preliminary budget for 2026-27, the Parish Board approved a Stewardship fundraising goal! I hope you have already started to discern what, and how, you can give to these essential campaigns. Our today and tomorrow depend on our giving.

I'd like to take a quick moment to give a shout out to our lay Board members—imagine mid-session musician introductions at a jazz concert. On keyboard, Mark Bailey, our tireless clerk (aka keeper of the minutes)! With the fancy script, is Ted Carlson, who sends out thank you notes to fellow parishioners! The incredible listener with the astute questions, I give you Susan Lincoln! Our person of many skills—from computers to capital campaigns to cooking—Peter

Cho! Her notebook holds the key to thoughtful engagement with the Parish Council, Bea Brunkhorst! And lastly, the woman who keeps our books and gets giddy whenever anyone asks a money question, our Treasurer, Wendy Innis! Along with our ministerial leaders, this “band” has reached the midpoint of our church year without skipping a beat. Thank you.

Here are January’s minutes!

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/2/folders/1jwD0J1V7DQ9BwnBbRrRsY6jEmgacTGB>

See you after the Blizzard!

Stacy Chandler, Parish Board President

PS. If you are a Bedford resident, don’t forget the annual Town Meeting on March 23. The Town Common Renovation project will be on the warrant!

Office Matters

I never thought I would say I was excited for winter to be over, but after this week, I am! The month of March can go either way, but let’s concentrate on counting down the days until Spring (21). **As a reminder (in case March comes in like a lion) please remember to stay tuned to WBZ news and ParishBiz for any closing or delay announcements.**

We kick off March with a Lyceum on Sunday, March 1st at 9AM in the Common Room. The First Friday Potluck will be on Friday, Mar. 6th at 6PM in the Common Room, followed by Karaoke at 7PM in the Sanctuary. The 5th Annual Irish Celebration Concert will be at 5PM on Saturday, March 14th in the Sanctuary. Later this month, the Talents & Treasures Auction will be on Saturday, Mar. 28th at 5PM. As always, please be sure to read further in this newsletter and visit the main [Calendar](#) to see all of our upcoming activities.

***NEW: Pledge & Capital Campaign Payments**.....our new 2026/2027 Stewardship campaign will be kicking off soon, as well as our Capital Campaign. As you send in payments, **PLEASE** make sure to write the appropriate designation on the memo line of your check (i.e. Pledge Year 26/27 or Capital Campaign). **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 Claudia 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 address 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

"And ev'ry one 'neath a vine and fig tree shall live in peace and unafraid. And into plowshares turn their swords, nations shall learn war no more."

– based on biblical texts from Isaiah and Micah to be sung by the youth choirs on Sunday, March 15th

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

Sunday, March 1st: Steve Sussman will be playing piano.

Sunday, March 8th: In honor of International Women's Day, the focus for the music will be on women composers and performers. Catherine Stornetta will be playing piano. Catherine played the service for us on Sunday, February 15th. The prelude will be "Loons" composed by Janet Welby and played by Catherine, Carol Epple-flute and Elizabeth Connors-clarinet. The adult choir will sing Elaine Hagenberg's "O Love" conducted by Sandra LaBarge-Neumann accompanied by Catherine and Nancy Hair on cello. Nancy and Catherine will also play Florence's Price's meditative and beautiful "Adoration". For the postlude Catherine will play music by Mary Rodgers, daughter of famous Broadway composer, Richard Rodgers.

Sunday, March 15th: Steve Sussman will be playing piano. Janet Welby and the First Parish youth choirs will sing the Hebrew folk song "Vine and Fig Tree" by Shalom Altman and Mary Donnelly's "Follow the River".

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

Sunday, March 29th: Steve Sussman will be playing piano.

Be sure to **mark your calendars** for the upcoming **5th Annual Irish Event: A Family Celebration** with a pot luck dinner sponsored by the Music Committee on **Saturday, March 14, 2026 at 5 p.m.** Check out the flyer elsewhere in this bulletin. More details about the event will follow in the coming weeks.

Good Friday is coming up on **Friday evening, April 3, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.** and there are **two services on Easter, April 5, 2026, a traditional service at 9:00 a.m. and an all-ages service at 11:00 a.m.** There will be LOTS of wonderful music at all the services. I hope you will come.

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.

If you know parents with children who are looking for a good youth choir for their kids, send them to Janet Welby for any questions youthchoirs@uubedford.org

- 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 less activity during this short month of February but we hope to get up to more exciting things in March!

Sunday March 1st- 11:30 am - 1 pm WELCOMEBACKpack event with Concord Prison Outreach All Ages service project followed by SYG time

Sunday March 8th - 11:30 am - 1 pm Regular SYG with a Scavenger Hunt

Sunday March 15th - 11:30 am - 1 pm Regular SYG with Group Games

Saturday March 21st - tentative service trip to Household Goods in Action - Stay Tuned!

Sunday March 29th - Adventures for Justice with UU Mass Action

Depart FPB at 11:30 am return by 5:30 pm, includes lunch, learning and Boda Borg with youth from Belmont and Arlington

Bedford Lyceum

The March Bedford Lyceum will be presented this Sunday, March 1, at 9AM in the Common Room. Carlough Faulker-Carroll will speak on "What 30 Years of Teaching Violin (and One Neuroscience Class) Have Taught Me About Learning and Community."

The April Bedford Lyceum will be delayed a week due to Easter. It will happen April 12 at 9 a.m. in the Common Room. Ginny Steel will discuss her experiences teaching English as a second language.



Vespers Services

Vespers will continue on the second Tuesday of the month, March 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.

Young Adults Games Night

Friday March 13th 6 - 8 pm First Parish in Bedford, Common Room

All young adults (post high school to early 30s) are invited to join for free dinner and games. There will be various types of table games + a jigsaw puzzle to work on. We are partnering with First Parish in Concord and First Parish in Lexington on this event and young adults from all over the area are invited!

Women's Book Group

The March book is "March" by Geraldine Brooks. We'll meet on Sunday, March 8th at 6 p.m. in the common room to talk about the book and share a potluck dinner. Please bring a dish to share.

The schedule for the remaining church year is:

Meeting Date	Book	Author
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	

SRC Update



*This place could be beautiful, right?
You could make this place beautiful.*
~ [Maggie Smith](#), Good Bones

In these dark days of winter and our current world, it can be hard to remember that there is so much good happening around us, all the time. One of the most rewarding things about being a member of SRC is continually learning about people who are working tirelessly to make the world a better place and supporting their efforts on behalf of FPB. Two organizations FPB is supporting this month with both action and funds are [Concord Prison Outreach](#) and the [International Justice Mission](#) (IJM).

On Sunday, March 1, FPB youth and community members will pack backpacks with supplies purchased with FPB funds as part of Concord Prison Outreach's [WELCOME BACK Pack Program](#). This program provides individuals leaving prison — specifically those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness — with essential items and resources to aid their reentry.

On Sunday, March 8, you will learn about our March Share the Plate recipient, IJM, which partners with local authorities and community leaders to protect people in poverty from violence, strengthen justice systems, and support survivors as they rebuild their lives with dignity and strength. You can support their good work by contributing to the March 8 Sunday collection via cash/check or [online](#) (select "Give to Sunday Collection").

Over the past few months, SRC has also distributed grants to a variety of organizations changing lives in their communities and beyond. In addition to Concord Prison Outreach, recipients include the Tenacity Challenge, Sowing Opportunities, UU Urban Ministry Roxbury Youth Program, the Partner Church Scholarship Fund, and Tres Sueños Morados. You can learn more about these recipients on our [website](#).

Do you know of another organization making a difference that you would like to support? We want to hear about it! Propose a recipient using our [online forms](#) or reach out to socialresponsibility@uubedford.org and we will be glad to guide you.

- Heather Black on behalf of the Social Responsibility Council

How to Reduce Taxes

The Capital Campaign and the yearly Pledge Drive will begin on March 15th.

You might decide to contribute to First Parish from money in your investments, for example your IRA or stock funds. This is a great idea that has advantages for you and for First Parish. You can transfer those assets as a tax-free gift to First Parish and not as taxable income to you. The key is to have the assets go directly to First Parish as a tax-free gift and **not** directly to you as taxable income.

Since you will be transferring the funds directly to a charity (First Parish) you will not have to pay taxes on the transfer **and** you can deduct the transfer amount on your 2026 taxes.

Here's how it works:

- Please reach out to me about the account numbers to be sure the contribution goes into the correct First Parish accounts.
- Contact your Broker or investment company and ask them to transfer the withdrawal directly to First Parish using the account number I will provide to you.

If you have any questions, please call me a 508-341-4187 or email me at wendyinnis@gmail.com

Safe Congregations Forum: Sunday, Mar. 8th, 12PM Bacon Room

Join Rev. Annie and Nate to talk about the need for more consistent adult volunteers in our children and youth programming. Our current teen staff for Sunday mornings are awesome, but they are not actually adults per our Safe Congregations policies. Staff will share the current realities and we can brainstorm ideas together about how we can get our programs to be fully supported and safer!

EJC Events

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 Groups at Carleton Willard Village

Carleton-Willard Discussion Forum with Rev. Jamie

The next meeting of the discussion forum at Carleton-Willard Village is Thursday, March 12 at 1pm. The topic is TBD.

Small Group at Carleton Willard Village with Rev. Annie

I'm sorry I missed our February small group due to illness. I look forward to our next small group. We'll meet for our small group in the Bedford Room at 2 pm on Thursday, March 19th.

Annual Stewardship Drive & Capital Campaign

Heads Up: Annual Stewardship Drive and Capital Campaign to Run Concurrently from March 15 – April 26, 2026

On Sunday, March 15, 2026, we will begin our Annual (1-year) Stewardship Pledge Drive along with the (3-year) Capital Campaign Pledge Drive. On this day, those of you attending church in person will receive a packet that includes information about both campaigns and two separate different-colored pledge cards – one for the annual Stewardship Drive and the other for the Capital Campaign. Those of you not in attendance will receive your packet in the mail. We do not ask for money at this point, but rather a pledge to contribute to both campaigns, payment due between July 1, 2026 and June 30, 2027 for your Annual Stewardship contribution and payment due between July 1, 2026 and June 30, 2029 for your Capital Campaign contribution. Pledges are due by April 26 but are welcome much sooner if possible. Instructions about returning pledge cards are included in the packet.

The Parish Board and the Finance Committee know that we are asking a lot financially from ourselves and therefore in their proposed budget have NOT increased the Annual Stewardship goal from last year despite giving our ministers and staff a 4% raise. That is excellent news! How did they do this? They removed the building maintenance transfer for this year and in addition don't have the expense of the Capital Campaign consultant.

For those of you who are new to the church this year, the Annual Stewardship Drive is run to fund the operating costs of the church for the following fiscal year (July 1 – June 30) and provides approximately 65% of our annual income. Salary and benefits for our ministers and staff account for approximately 70% of our annual budget.

HOPE is the theme for the church this year. Our hope is that everyone will give as generously as they can to both campaigns. "Giving is an Act of Hope!"

Thank you in advance for your generosity!

Your Stewardship Team: Sarah Dorer and Bill Rabinowitz, Co-Chairs; Irene Gravina, Linda Pollitz

Death Matters

The third session of the *Death Matters* series will focus on end-of-life care options and alternative options to hasten death. We'll discuss:

- **Hospice Care**
- **Palliative Care**
- **Not Starting Treatment or Stopping Treatment**

- **Voluntary Stopping of Eating and Drinking**
- **Palliative Sedation**
- **Medical Aid in Dying**

Attendance at prior *Death Matters* sessions is not a prerequisite to coming to this one or future sessions.

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

There are three opportunities for you to join the same session:

Sunday, 3/22 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM - Bacon Room

Wednesday 3/25 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM – Virtual session via ZOOM

<https://zoom.us/j/92849823474?pwd=XzV2Y6f8Lp9cPGXbUdB6z7sDv0sF3E.1>

Meeting ID: 928 4982 3474

Passcode: 537647

One tap mobile +13017158592,,92849823474#

By phone 1-301-715-8592

Thursday 2/26 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM – Bacon Room

-Maureen Richichi, End-of-Life Doula

Capital Campaign Update

Thanks to everyone who participated in February's special congregational meeting about the "It's Our Turn" campaign. We are grateful for and excited by the unanimous vote to launch the capital fundraiser. It will begin in conjunction with FPB's annual stewardship drive on Mar 15. And both fundraisers will run in parallel through Apr 25. Campaign pledges made this spring can be fulfilled over three years from FY 2026 - FY 2029.

During the leadup to the campaign's start, we ask everyone to seriously consider how much they can contribute to this major fundraiser. Its \$1.5M goal is ambitious yet achievable. By collectively pooling our resources, the FPB community really can shape the church's future for decades to come.

To learn more about the upcoming campaign, please visit its website at <https://uubedforg.org/capital-campaign/its-our-turn>. Or scan the code below with your phone/tablet:



Talents & Treasures Auction

The catalog for FPB's 2026 Talents & Treasures Auction is open. Several wonderful donations have already been made. And there's still plenty of room for your contribution to be part of it and make this year's event a big success.

The items that generate the most excitement are often personal experiences rather than physical goods: a dinner party in someone's home, a weekend at a family cabin, a guided tour of somewhere unexpected, an evening in a backyard hot tub. Past favorites have included:

- A weekend at a waterfront cabin on the Pemigewasset River, with kayaks and a canoe
- A weekend in a Sugar Hill, NH cabin with views of Mt. Lafayette — and Polly's Pancake Parlor a mile away
- Destination: Hot Tub — a 90-minute backyard spa evening with drinks and a chocolate send-off
- Greek dinner for 10 with authentic spanakopita, lamb, and baklava
- A Fall Harvest Dinner with vegetables straight from the community garden

But donations can be almost anything: original artwork, a fun class or lesson, a service (carpentry, gardening, bagpiping!), or a group event of your own invention. If any of these spark an idea — a place you could share, a skill you could offer, an evening you'd love to host — we'd love to have your donation.

Submit your donation at [FirstParishBedford.auctria](https://firstparishbedford.auctria).

Plant Fair Table

Come see us at the Plant Fair Table in the Common for seeds and to sign up for the Plant Fair!

We want your ideas for our 70th!

Amazing to think that under all of our snow are plants just waiting for Spring! It's time to plan the Plant and Craft Fair! Interested in running the Bake table? Or how about having plants in your yard dug up? And it's time to plant those seedlings! We will be in the Common room on at least March 1st and March 8th to offer seeds and supplies for planting seedlings that we are asking you to foster.

A sign-up genius will be available soon for you to sign up for the many jobs we have before and the day of the Fair.

Hey- do you have a fun idea of how we can make this 70th Anniversary Plant Fair special? Please come by and tell us or write to Bea Brunkhorst and Dorothy Africa at committees@uubedford.org

Here is our crafter sign-up page link- spread it around to crafters you know!

<https://uubedford.org/events/first-parish-plant-craft-fair/>

PLANT FAIR @ 70
You can't buy happiness, but you can buy plants
—and that's pretty much the same thing!

SAVE THE DATE!
Saturday, May 16, 2026
on the Bedford Common
10:00 AM — 3:00 PM

The Annual Plant and Craft Fair—a tradition for 70 years—come next May!
Crafts were added a decade-or-so ago—in coming back with its wide variety of heritage perennials dug from Bedford gardens, herb & vegetable seedlings, as well as stock from local nurseries. We are continuing this tradition with craft and local food vendors, a children's activity table, our famous baked goods table—and music!

For more information about the fair, go to this web page:
<https://uubedford.org/events/first-parish-plant-craft-fair/>
If you would like more information about being an exhibitor—
please send an email to us:
fpbplantfair.exhibitors@gmail.com

First Parish in Bedford, Utopian Universalists
35 The Green Road, Bedford, MA 03110 • 781-295-2794
www.uubedford.org

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 Maclver
 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**



7:00 PM **Saturday, June 20, 2026**

www.uubedford.org • 781-275-7994

First Parish is
Wheelchair Accessible





FIRST PARISH MUSIC COMMITTEE



presents

Irish Celebration: A Family Event

Saturday, March 14, 2026

5:00 PM

Featuring **Celtic Music** Experts

Joy Grimes, Emily Peterson, & Dirk Tiede



ALSO



Ian Carroll

the **First Parish Youth Choirs**,
led by Director **Janet Welby**

PLUS!

Storytelling by
Nathan Sellers



POTLUCK!

Bring an entree, side, or beverage to share
during the meal break – *dessert provided!*

Suggested donations (accepted at the door)

Adults: \$20 Youth 6-12: \$10 Children 5 & under: FREE

Seniors: \$15 Family maximum: \$50

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