

The Steeple



First Parish in Framingham
Unitarian Universalist

VOL 8 NO. 12 December 1, 2015 *A Welcoming Congregation*

Monthly Reflection Theme: Listening

Minister's Column

My wish for all of us:

Inspiration enough to see the light of the holy in everyone...especially those who challenge our loving intent the most!

A way to say "yes!" to all aspects of winter weather.

Pre-emptive self-forgiveness for the excess we will participate in, despite our longing to go another way.

Lots of singing.

A way to embrace those who are needy with whatever gifts we can give and with prayer.

One moment where we grasp in mind, body and spirit the immense beauty of life.

December Blessings to Each and All, Rev. Kathleen

**Please send the names of anyone born or adopted in 2015 that you would like named at the December 20 service and on Christmas Eve to me at minister@uuframingham.org.

Worship Services

Sunday, December 6 10 am

Being Mindful About December as a Unitarian Universalist

Rev. Kathleen Hepler

In our congregation we have various religious backgrounds...including none. There are interfaith families among us. What traditions, what activities and what mind-sets might we bring into this season of light? I will say a bit about the history of Christmas in America as it relates to the Unitarian tradition. You might be surprised!

Sunday, December 13 10 am

To Listen, To Love

Rev. Kathleen Hepler

How good a listener are you? What can help us be better listeners, and why would we want to be? A good practice for holiday gatherings.

Sunday, December 20 10 am

Multigenerational Holiday Service with Christmas Theme

Presented by the RE Council and Nate Sellers, Director of Religious Exploration.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

Thursday, December 24

5 pm

This service is planned with children in mind...but is open to all! Carols, a nativity pageant, multi-generational choir and the traditional 'Silent Night' candle lighting in the dark. Come one! Come all!

7:30 pm

Rev. Kathleen Hepler

This service is planned with older children and adults in mind. Come and sing the old carols, hear the old story and reflect on its meaning for us now. A BRASS QUINTET...and the First Parish adult choir will grace our service. We join together at the end by bringing the light of love into the dark while singing 'Silent Night.' Join us for conversation and holiday goodies afterward in the Parish House.

Sunday, December 27 10 am

Another Year

Rev. Kathleen Hepler

We welcome the congregations of First Parish in Sudbury and First Parish in Wayland to the annual tri-church worship service.

Resources for this month's reflection theme

Listening deeply (to others, to one's own inner voice, to the sounds of life) is a skill that can be learned. It is a key ingredient in loving well, in conflict resolution, and in spiritual connection with all of life. The service on December 13th will be about listening.

Here are a few resources and ideas for family and personal learning:

Books for adults:

The Lost Art of Listening by Michael P. Nichols

The Zen of Listening by Rebecca Z. Shafer

Crucial Conversations by Grenny Patterson

How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen so

Kids Will Talk by Faber and Mazlish

Books for small children:

Howard B. Wigglebottom Learns to Listen by Howard Binkow, Reverend Ana

Listen, Listen by Phyllis Gershator (sounds of nature's seasons)

I Have a Little Problem Said the Bear by Heinz Janisch

On-line Resources: (there are many!)

"10 Steps to Effective Listening." *Forbes*

"5 Simple Ways to be a Better Listener"

"The Ten Step Program to Becoming a Better Listener"

Because of You and First Parish...

My mom has recently started to be part of the First Parish community. Through her presence I am seeing our congregation again through new eyes. She is amazed by the many ways people are involved here to do good work in the world. She is aware of how many opportunities there are to get to know new people and to let herself be known. And she is surprised by how many people tell her "this church saved my life."

I think of being saved as something that happens in other kinds of religious traditions, where people can be saved or damned based on their adherence to doctrine or their relationship with God. But when people here say this church has saved them, I think they are speaking to something else. I hear in their stories that they found the community and acceptance they needed here. Or they found in the worship service the inspiration, resonance, or provocative questioning they needed. Or they found here a place with spiritual principles that align with their own values. Or that they found comfort and solace in a time of despair or broken-ness. I came here because my young daughter said she wanted to be from a religious family. I have stayed here because I found what I needed. In fact I found so much more that I didn't even realize I needed, here at First Parish.

Because First Parish exists, and because our members make it a practice to welcome all who come -- whomever they love, whatever their life circumstances, wherever they are on their spiritual journey, with whatever happiness or despair they may carry -- we are creating a safe haven for love to flourish in our world.

Diane Bassett, 2016 Canvass Chair

From the Capital Campaign Committee

Last chance for brick inscription! If your donation for the capital campaign totals \$1,000 by December 15, you can have a brick engraved and installed in the Greeley Courtyard. Donations should be deposited in the capital campaign mailbox in the main office, and then you should contact Mary Rose Wells about your inscription at 508-243-4443.

-Mary Rose Wells, chair

Deck the Halls



Save the Date! Sunday, December 6

At Winter Solstice, the nights are longest and the days are shortest. Since pagan times, people have brought in plants from Nature to ward off winter. Evergreen trees, mistletoe, holly and ivy have graced many a home. Somehow, their greenery seems to defy the winter cold. Add festive candles and singing and you have the perfect cure for this darkest time of the year. Here at First Parish, we aim to do the same.

Although our garlands are made of mere plastic (they have to last over the years!), Worship & Arts cordially invites you to come help decorate First Parish this holiday season. It should be a lot of fun, a chance to ease in to the holidays and get to know your fellow First Parishioners a little better.

The date is Sunday, December 6. Grab a cup of coffee after the service and then come back to the Meeting House to help drape a garland or two. Decorations are in the basement and it usually takes about an hour to set up the whole thing. The work will go quickly with a handful of volunteers, and you'll get to express your creativity.

Jane Letteney Clarke is coordinating the effort, and she will make the call for helpers Sunday, December 6 during coffee hour. I'm going ... Won't you join in the festivities? Who knows, maybe Dave Doucette will bring his Christmas music!

Marianne Orlando
Worship & Arts Council

Religious Exploration

Sunday, December 6 is the final day to bring in your gifts for the Undecorate the Tree program.

There will be a multigenerational service on December 20 lead by the Religious Exploration Council, with participation of children and youth in a Christmas-themed program.

There will be a child-friendly Christmas Eve candle-lighting service at 5 pm.

Nate Sellers,
Director of Religious Exploration

Music Notes



First Parish Christmas Choir

Ever wanted to sing in the choir, but weren't able to make the weekly rehearsal commitment? Join the FP Christmas Choir!

Attend four Wednesday evening rehearsals during the month of December:

December 2 December 9

December 16 December 23

and sing with the choir at the 7:30 service on Christmas Eve.

Feel free to contact me with any questions.
Claudia Keyian, First Parish Music Director
978-462-3405/Claudia@claudiamusic.com

Children's Choir

We are looking for more children, grades 1-8, who are interested in singing. Please contact Dean Arvidson at arvidsonD@aol.com.

Caring Through Sharing

Guatemalan Jewelry and Crafts Fair

On Sunday, December 6 the social justice working group, Under the Same Moon, will conduct their annual jewelry sale in Scott Hall, after the service. Please consider purchasing some of your holiday gifts that day. All proceeds are donated to the school Bendicion de Dios in Alotenango, Guatemala. The school provides an education to children who are unable to afford public school. Your purchase also creates employment with improved earnings for over 25 artisan families from the Guatemalan highlands. NEW this year will be fair trade coffee from Guatemala in partnership with Dean's Beans.

Rebecca Center, Under the Same Moon

Take a Small Step to End Mass Incarceration

Massachusetts UU activists are invited to join the Coffee Hour Connection Cadre to visit other UU churches during coffee hour to invite people to join the statewide movement to reform our judicial and corrections systems.

EMIT – End Mass Incarceration, a task force of UU Mass Action Network, seeks activists willing to visit one coffee hour of a nearby UU church, on one Sunday morning a month. The volunteers will contact the minister in advance, and on Sunday morning set up a table with information and letters for people to read and sign to state legislators.

The letters are pre-printed and ask state legislators to support nine bills to restore justice for people who are often low-income, black or brown, and may suffer from mental illness or addiction.

The goal of Coffee Hour Connections is for the volunteers to find voters who care about justice enough to set up and attend a meeting with their state legislator. This is THE most influential way to end mass incarceration in Massachusetts.

For more information or to sign up, contact emit.susan@gmail.com, Susan Tordella, telephone 978 772 3930.

Holiday Cakes to Benefit the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless



The holidays are coming and we will be taking orders for cakes, cookies, and new this year: three lovely holiday ornaments. Sales benefit the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless initiative, A Bed

for Every Child. They provide complete beds, including a mattress set, for each student referred to them by their public school partners in our state. There is a connection between a poor night's sleep and negative consequences on a student's education and future. We can help by purchasing these delicious treats!

- ◇ Chocolate Espresso Cake, \$15 each
- ◇ Gingerbread Cake, \$15 each
- ◇ Gingerbread Reindeer Nose Bag, \$6 each
- ◇ Snickerdoodle Cookie and Chocolate Chunk Brownie Combination, \$18 each
- ◇ Holiday Cookie Collection Tin, \$20 each
- ◇ Holiday Ornament, \$15 each

Look for us in the front hall of the Parish House to order on: Sundays November 29, December 6, and December 13. Cakes, etc. will be delivered in the front hall of the Parish House on Sunday, December 20. Contacts:

Myrna Howe 781-235-4226

Valerie Waldman 508-877-7769

Around The Parish

If you would like to share a joy or a concern in the newsletter please contact the Caritas Coordinator. Caritas helps those in the Parish who face difficulties such as hospitalization, illness, and death of a loved one. Caritas coordinates cards, visits, meals, referrals to services and newsletter announcements. The December Coordinator is Jane Letteney Clarke, who can be reached at 508-877-4417 or via email at Jeal11@comcast.net.

Programs & Announcements

Family Promise Volunteer Training

All youth and adults are invited to join us on Tuesday, December 1 from 7 to 8:30pm in the Huntley Room for a Family Promise volunteer training. This training will prepare you to volunteer with the Family Promise families when they visit us in February, April and August. If you have any questions, contact Denise Moorehead at dmmoorehead@gmail.com.

Wellspring Wednesday

Join us for a potluck dinner on December 2 at 6pm in the Huntley Room. Afterwards, attend one of three enriching programs: A dialogue with Rev. Hepler about being more conscious about shaping the winter holidays. *What experiences, rituals and ideas do you retain from your past and what do you add?* (Huntley Room); 30 minute meditation followed by 50 minute Jack Kornfield audio tape (Memorial Room) or Christmas Choir rehearsal (Meeting House). Programs start at 7, except choir rehearsal which starts at 7:30. Or attend just the dinner or one of the programs. Info: Margaret Krell 781-899-3650 or Lucille Riddle at 508-875-5468.

Women's Alliance Holiday Luncheon

The Women's Alliance Holiday Luncheon will be on December 14 at noon in the Huntley Room. If you haven't been contacted, please call Susie MacDonald at (508) 875-3322.

Spirituality Book Group

The Spirituality Book Group will meet Tuesday, December 15 at 7:15 in the Memorial Room. We will discuss *Beginners' Grace*, by Kate Braestrup, a UU minister. All are invited! Contact Julia Schneiderman with any questions at jsandjw@verizon.net.

WomenCircle

Meets Tuesday, December 15 at 7:15 pm in the Olympia Brown Room. This group meets monthly for discussion and exploration of women's spirituality. All First Parish women are welcome; for more information, please contact Karen Wagner at blauaugen@comcast.net.

December Dinner Discussion

The next Dinner Discussion will be held on Saturday, December 19 at the home of Russ and Carol Greve. The discussion topic will be announced later. Appetizers are at 6 pm, dinner at 7, and discussion at 8. Contact Dick Paul via email at repen2@comcast.net or call 508-872-9729 for more information or to say what you are bringing to share: appetizer, salad, entree, dessert or beverage.

Kindred Spirits

This small support group for moms will meet on Sunday evenings from 7-8 pm in the Memorial Room during this holiday season. Each meeting has a simple theme as a conversation starter: November 29 Peace, December 6 Gifts, December 13 Joy, December 20 Light.

Announcements & Programs

Meditation

Wednesday, December 2 and 9, 7 pm, in the Memorial Room. Half hour seated meditation. For those who would like to stay, there will an hour-long film presentation of talks by Jack Kornfield about mindfulness.

Friday, December 4 and 11, 9-10am in the Memorial Room. Simple silence followed by tea and perhaps a short reading. Drop in, by donation. Led by Joti Royster.

Meditation Retreat

December 5, Memorial Room, 9am-1pm

A talk from Pema Chodron's teachings entitled "The Noble Heart" will be presented. In these talks Ani Pema offers key insights into the four limitless qualities, structuring a home practice, the four great catalysts of awakening and much more. The retreat will include practice time as well as teachings. Register by email to joti@sacredspaces.ws. Led by Joti Royster.

Eckhart Tolle Evenings

Thursday, December 3 and 10, 7-8:30 pm in the Memorial Room. Short silent meditation sitting followed by DVD presentation of Eckhart Tolle talk and discussion. Drop in, by donation. Led by Joti Royster.

Joti Royster has studied in both the Theraveda and Vajrayana Buddhist lineages and completed intensive study at the Barre center for Buddhist Studies.

Sacred Circle

Winter Solstice Dance

Sunday, December 20, 6-8 pm in Scott Hall. White clothing optional for this evening. No partner, experience or RSVP needed; just come! All dances taught; some live music. A \$5-\$10 donation to help defray First Parish expenses will be appreciated. Contact First Parish member Paula Adelson (508) 485-1030; leave your phone number slowly.



Yes, There Is An Afterlife

With legacy planning, your appreciation of and contributions to First Parish can go on, joining a more than 300-year-old tradition of First Parishioners building a foundation of support for the congregation they love. The First Parish Endowment Fund, managed by your Trustees, provides an annual pledge of more than \$20,000 to supplement the canvass. Building the fund helps bring financial stability to our faith community. You don't have to be a millionaire to leave a legacy gift; bequests of all sizes to the First Parish Endowment Fund work together to provide benefit to all. For information, contact the FP Trustees Walter Barker, Jen Long or David Ortmeyer.

Find Gifts for your friends and family and Support First Parish!

First Parish in Framingham is an Amazon.com associate, so when you shop Amazon through the portal at the bottom of our website, www.uuframingham.org, a percentage of your purchase is automatically allocated to First Parish in Framingham—at no additional cost to you. Books, dvds, gifts cards, beauty care, groceries, so many options. And gifts can be wrapped and shipped directly to recipients.

Newsletter Deadlines

The December Mid-Month Update deadline is December 11.

The deadline for the January Steeple will be December 17.

Please send announcements to Sara Morrison Neil at office@uuframingham.org or call her at 508-872-3111x201.

DECEMBER 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 9:15 Yoga, Huntley 6p, ESL, 110 Edgell 7p Family Promise Training, Huntley Room 7:30p Heritage Chorale, SH	2 10:30 ESL, 110 Edgell Rd 6p, Wellspring Wednesday, Huntley 6pm ESL, 110 Edgell 7p, Meditation, Memorial Rm 7:30p Choir, MH	3 8 Coffee & Muffins: Huntley 5:30p Free Medical Clinic, 110 Edgell 6:30p JYG, Huntley 7p Eckhart Tolle Evening, Memorial 7p Fairs & Squares, Scott Hall	4 9 Meditation, Memorial Rm 12p Women's Mindfulness Grp, Memorial Rm	5 9, ESL. 110 Edgell Private Rental, Scott Hall 9-4p, Huntley 10-2p, Olympia Brown Rm 2-3 p 9 Meditation Retreat, Memorial Rm
6 10 Worship, MH 11 Holiday Cakes Orders, PH lobby 11 Guatemalan Jewelry & Crafts Sale, SH 11 Undecorate the Tree, Memorial Room 11 YRUU Bake Sale 11:30 CAT, Huntley 6p YRUU, Huntley	7 1p Caritas, Minister's Study 5:30p Free Med. Clinic, 110 Edgell 6:30 p, ESL, 110 Edgell Rd 7p, Rounds, SH 7 p Bell Choir Rehearsal, MH 7:30 pm, Yoga, Huntley	8 9:15 Yoga, Huntley 1p Stitches in Time, Memorial Room 6p, ESL, 110 Edgell 7p FCNS Board mtg, Huntley 7:30p Heritage Chorale, SH	9 10:30 ESL, 110 Edgell Rd 6pm ESL, 110 Edgell 6:30 p, OUT Metro-West NEXUS Scott Hall 6:30 p PFLAG, Huntley 7p, Meditation, Memorial Rm 7:30p Choir, MH	10 8 Coffee & Muffins: Huntley 5:30p Free Medical Clinic, 110 Edgell 7p BoA, Huntley 7p. Eckhart Tolle Evening, Memorial Rm 7p Fairs & Squares, Scott Hall	11 9 Meditation, Memorial Rm 12p Women's Mindfulness Grp, Memorial Rm	12 9, ESL. 110 Edgell Private Rental, Scott Hall 9-4p, Huntley 10-2p, Olympia Brown Rm 2-3p 5pm, Welcoming Team Potluck, Huntley 7p, Fairs & Squares
13 10 Worship, MH 11 Holiday Cakes Orders, PH lobby 11am JYG Bake Sale 2p Private Rental, SH 6p YRUU, Huntley	14 11:30-2:30 Women's Alliance, Huntley 5:30p Free Medical Clinic, 110 Edgell, 6:30 ESL 7p, Rounds, SH 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal, MH 7:30p, Yoga, Huntley	15 9:15 Yoga, Huntley 5:30p, FCNS staff mtg, Olympia 6p, ESL, 110 Edgell 7:15p Book Grp, Memorial Rm 7:30p, WomenCircle, Olympia Rm 7:30p Heritage Chorale, SH	16 10:30, ESL, 110 Edgell Rd 6p ESL, 110 Edgell 7p, Finance Council, Huntley 7p Meditation, Memorial Rm 7:30 p Choir, MH	17 8 Coffee & Muffins, Huntley 5:30 p Clinic, 110 Edgell 6:30p JYG, Huntley 6:30p Parents & Others, Memorial Rm 7p Fairs & Squares, Scott Hall	18	19 9 ESL. 110 Edgell Private Rental, Scott Hall 9-4p, Huntley 10-2p, Olympia Brown Rm 2-3 p 5p Private Rental, Scott Hall
20 10 MultiGenerational-Worship, MH 11 Pick up Holidays Cakes, PH lobby 11:30, Spanish Conversation Club, Servetus Rm 6p Sacred Circle Dance, Scott Hall 6p YRUU, Huntley	21 9 FCNS, Huntley 5:30 p Free Medical Clinic, 110 Edgell 6:30 p, ESL, 110 Edgell Rd 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal, MH 7:30p Yoga, Huntley	22 9:15 Yoga, Huntley 1p Stitches in Time, Memorial Room 6p, ESL, 110 Edgell	23 10:30, ESL, 110 Edgell Rd 6p ESL, 110 Edgell 7p Meditation, Memorial Rm 7:30 p Choir, MH	24 Christmas Eve 5p Worship Service 7:30p Worship Service	25 Christmas Private Rental	26 9 ESL. 110 Edgell
27 10 Community Worship Service, Meeting House 11:30 CAT, Huntley 6p YRUU, Huntley	28 5:30p Free Medical Clinic, 110 Edgell 6:30p ESL, 110 Edgell Rd 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal, MH	29 6p, ESL, 110 Edgell 7:30p Heritage Chorale, SH	30 10:30, ESL, 110 Edgell Rd 6p ESL, 110 Edgell 7p Meditation, Memorial Rm 7:30p Choir, MH	31 New Year's Eve 6p Fairs & Squares, Scott Hall		

The First Parish In Framingham
Unitarian Universalist
A Welcoming Congregation
24 Vernon Street
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December 1, 2015

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