

# The Steeple



VOL 9 NO. 1 January 1, 2016

First Parish in Framingham  
Unitarian Universalist  
A Welcoming Congregation

## Monthly Reflection Theme: Resilience

### Minister's Column

Writing this on the edge between two years, leads me to consider the nature of our lives in time. New Year's Eve marks the passage of time and has us remembering that, in a secular sense, our time on earth is limited. This of course, is the human condition. The secular call of New Year's Eve, then, is to assess our lives within the context of passing time and realign our living toward the most meaningful. There is a way that this life-reckoning shows our endless capacity for hope.

But we exist in another kind of time as well. James Carroll once wrote that we are usually like fish who float around day to day in the structures and strictures of our lives. But the difference between us and fish is that we can access an awareness of another kind of time. Call it sacred time, or our residence in some flowing water of life's longing for itself. He writes: "That fluidity is the revelation that while time is ever flowing by, *what you swim in is eternity.*"

In the New Year may you move toward the meaningful in your day to day living.

And, may you take the time to remember the depth of the water you swim in.

*Rev. Kathleen Hepler*

### Sunday Worship Services, 10 am

#### January 3

##### *Blessed Resilience*

The Reverend Kathleen Hepler

In physics the definition is "the capacity of a strained body to recover its size and shape after a compressive stress." As we begin the New Year, we celebrate the human capacity for resilience. What beliefs, thought patterns, or qualities make it possible for us to keep at it... re-group...come back even better?

#### January 10

##### *Trust, Faith and Freedom*

The Reverend Judy Mannheim

We are a people who seek to face the world with trust, to move toward freedom for all and to rejoice that our faith serves us in this direction. We will reflect on these things with joy.

*Rev. Judy Mannheim is a retired Unitarian Universalist minister and long time member of First Parish in Framingham.*

#### January 17

*"But, We Have Tried So Hard!"* Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Sunday

The Reverend Kathleen Hepler

Sunday morning, as it is often said, is the most segregated time in American life. Why is that? This is an often-lamented reality in UU Congregations despite many efforts through the years. Why is this? How shall we go forward as a faith tradition, as a congregation?

Members of the 'Black Lives Matter' group here at First Parish will be involved in the service.

#### January 24

##### *Bringing the Spiritual to its Senses:*

##### *A History of Religion in 5 1/2 Objects*

The Reverend Kathleen Hepler

What is a "religious" or "spiritual" experience anyway? Based on a book by S. Brent Plate this service will focus on five images/metaphors that have stood the test of time in offering paths to sacred knowing.

#### January 31

##### *The Narratives We Choose*

The Reverend Kathleen Hepler

What stories do we tell ourselves and others, and how do they affect our lives? Can we shape the narratives we tell about ourselves and the world around us for the common good?

## ***From the Board of Assessors***

***Happy New Year!*** I hope that you have had wonderful holidays and are excited to embark on a new year. Your Board of Assessors have been busy and we hope we can help launch this year with some important directions at a **Parish Meeting to be held Thursday, January 21 at 7PM** in the Meeting House.

The Board joyously recommends that Patrick O'Neil be "adopted" as a Minister Emeritus at First Parish in Framingham. It is his wish, as he felt most at home here, and those of us who recall his tenure enjoyed that warmth.

We will also be voting on substantial and important set of changes in the Bylaws. These changes have been carefully crafted and reviewed over the last year in order to bring greater clarity to our organization. The proposed changes will be sent to parishioners in early January and a talk-back meeting will be arranged after a Sunday service before the 21st. We feel this is necessary for reasons presented in past Congregational Meetings:

- Some organizational practices have been out of compliance with the FPF bylaws .
- We want clear definitions of active Councils and better Board support for them.
- A number of Bylaws have caused confusion over the years and we feel they will be more effective with these changes.

This is an important step for the Parish and a great opportunity to kick off a stronger organization in 2016. We hope that you will review these changes and come to vote these changes on January 21.

With best wishes for a great new year,

-David Mendelsohn, Chair

## **Because of You and First Parish...**

The applause after the postlude on Sunday December 13 was lasting and exuberant. Members and friends were showing their deep appreciation for Tom Hill, an accomplished clarinetist who shared his talent with us at the invitation of our Music Director, Claudia Keyian. In addition to his postlude, Claudia arranged a beautiful pairing of the clarinet and organ with the parish choir to share *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring*, one of Bach's most familiar and beloved pieces. It was a memorable service.

Music is a deeply ingrained part of church for me, something I know to also be true for many of you. I happily sing almost any hymn. At times I close my eyes and simply listen. Sometimes I am overcome with emotion that rests just under the surface, revealed by lyrics, or a melody, or simply the blessing of singing in community. Often the music provides an extension of the prayerful reflection I seek. I have been enjoying a brief return to the choir during this holiday season, deepening my own spiritual experience by singing with others. And I have discovered the truth of something told to me a while back -- that many who sing in the First Parish choir view it not as performance, but as service to the community they love. Knowing how important music is to this community, they share their musical talents so that each of us may find what we need in the service. This is surely true of our bell choir and our children's choir as well.

Because First Parish exists, and because so many of our members and friends choose to share their love of music in service to our church, we are creating a joyful place where each of us can deepen and enrich our own spiritual experience.

Diane Bassett, 2016  
Canvass Chair

# **Social Justice**

## **First Parish Framingham Prison Outreach Informational Meeting**

January 10, 11:30am in the Huntley Room  
The Social Justice Coordinating Council of Framingham First Parish will hold an informational meeting on current prison outreach programs in the area. The purpose of the meeting is to consider starting a new "working group" that supports the local women's prison, MCI Framingham. It is possible that any outreach would be a partnership effort among a number of faith communities. Or it might mean that some of those interested may join an already established group that is represented at this meeting. The need is urgent and the women behind bars are minutes away.

The following presenters are from organizations that are actively involved inside prisons or with formerly incarcerated men and women. We are fortunate to have them join us.

- Holly Lapp, Administrative Assistant and Carol Peters, former Executive Director of Concord Prison Outreach; Their motto is Human Kindness Behind Prison Walls.

- Cynthia Goldberg, Founder and Director of the F8 Foundation. She works with formerly incarcerated woman and men, and also runs a full life recovery program.

Material will be available about the Partakers organization (College Behind Bars). They send out teams of people who mentor women and men in prison as they attend the Boston University Prison Education Program. Program Director Arthur Bembury is actively looking for interested people to join mentoring teams for MCI-Framingham. There's a list of women waiting in MCI Framingham for mentors. He would come out to Framingham to explain the program and train volunteer at a later date if we find folks who are interested.

If you are interested in the critical work of prison outreach, we welcome you to this informational meeting. A light luncheon at 11:30 will begin the gathering in the Huntley Room. Please pass the word to any others who might be interested. Contact Beverly Smith at [beverlysmith19@verizon.net](mailto:beverlysmith19@verizon.net) or Dawn Mendelsohn at [dpmendels@gmail.com](mailto:dpmendels@gmail.com).

## **Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Breakfast *Is Education Still the Path to the Dream?***

January 18, 8am, Verve Crown Plaza Hotel  
Host: Greater Framingham Community Church  
Speaker: Dr. Javier Cevallos, President FSU  
MC: Sean Huddleston, FSU Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer. Musicians: Porsha Marie Funches, Linda Brown-San Martin.

Adults \$30, youths (13-18) \$10.

Register by sending name, address and payment to GFCC MLK Breakfast, Franklin and Park Streets, PO Box 629, Framingham, MA 01704

## **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Youth Conference *Equality, Diversity, Justice: The Struggle Continues***

Saturday, January 16  
8:30am-1:30pm  
Framingham State University  
100 State Street  
Workshops, teambuilding, lunch,  
panel presentation.

Open to all youth K-12 and adults.

Free admission!

Contact Lisa Cargill, 508-626-2118

*Hosted by GFCC Board of Youth*

## **Climate Action Team News (CAT)**

An historic agreement to combat climate change was reached at the Paris Climate Negotiations in December. 187 nations made commitments to reduce their greenhouse emissions. The new agreement asks these countries to return to the negotiating table every five years with plans that will ratchet up the stringency of their existing plans. The next meeting will be in 2020 when countries will be required to make tougher commitments.

Ten members of the CAT marched in the NYC Climate March over a year ago to highlight the Paris talks and six members marched in the Climate, Jobs and Justice Rally at the Boston Common on December 12.

The job facing us now is to insure that our state and national legislators and leaders keep their commitments. The long term goal is to make sure global warming stays below 2 degrees centigrade and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature rise to 1.5 degrees C. The temperature has already increased about 1 degree C since preindustrial times. The agreement also says wealthy countries should continue to offer financial support to help poorer countries reduce their emissions and adapt to climate change.

### ***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 January Coordinator is Eva Benda who can be reached at 508-872-7125 or [Evabenda@verizon.net](mailto:Evabenda@verizon.net)

The CAT encourages all parish members to reduce their personal carbon footprint and to join us in pushing our local, state and national legislators to keep their current commitments and pass necessary legislation to reduce greenhouse gases. Legislation is now proposed at the state level to:

- 1) place a price on carbon based fuels
- 2) reduce pension fund investments in fossil fuel companies
- 3) increase net metering for PV systems and maintain the retail price for electricity placed back on the grid
- 4) promote increased use of renewable energy vs. installing new gas pipelines

The next meeting of the CAT is Sunday, January 3 at 11:30 AM in the Huntley Room. There will also be a 350 MA MetroWest meeting in the Huntley Room at 7PM on Thursday, February 4. Join us at these meetings and learn how you can make a difference in combating climate change.

Larry Decker, CAT Chair

### **Brainstorming Ways We Can Strengthen Our Church Community**

A lively discussion of all the things we can think of to make our church community stronger, more vibrant, longer lasting...

Come and share your thoughts, energy, and loving presence. One time commitment only!!!  
(When will you get another offer like that?!)

Monday, January 11, 7:30 to 8:30

If you need child care or have questions or suggestions, call Robin Hegvik at 302-345-7819 or email her at [robhegvik@comcast.net](mailto:robhegvik@comcast.net).

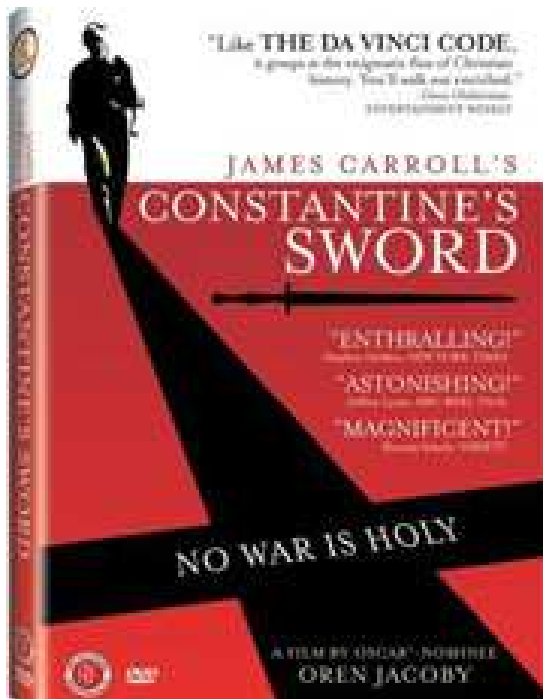
## Programs & Announcements

### Wellspring Wednesday

Join us for a potluck on January 13 at 6pm in the Huntley Room. Bring a dish, or pay \$5 at the door. Afterwards, attend a showing of the documentary *Constantine's Sword*, (ninety minutes) followed by a discussion.

From Ty Burr's review in *The Boston Globe*.

"A documentary that zooms in scope from the millennial to the profoundly personal and . . . speaks provocatively to history and our moment. . . [T]he film is a dense yet fiercely eloquent examination of how and when Christ's message of peace became perverted into an instrument of war. Carroll's larger point is that this war has been waged over the centuries against non-believing 'others' ... and continues to occupy much ... evangelical Protestant group-think."



The UnCommon Coffeehouse is thrilled to present The JazzQ Friday, January 8th, 8PM.



The Jazz Q (Q for Quintet) plays an enticing blend of jazz standards, originals, and arrangements of classic rock and blues. The group features First Parish's very own Mike Caruso on Guitar. Joining him are local jazz musicians, Steve Esposito; Keyboards, Sarah Hanahan; Alto Saxophone, Bruce Hanahan; Drums and Richard Hale-Shaw; Bass. Look forward to some special guests joining Mike and his bunch on this very special evening of music! Special ticket pricing is \$10 for adults, \$7 for students, with a family price of \$20, and will be sold at the door and through Centre Music.



### Women's Alliance

The Women's Alliance will meet January 11 at noon in the Huntley Room. The program will be "Your favorite book." Tea and coffee will be served.  
—Susie MacDonald. 508-875-3322

# Program and Announcements

## Sacred Circle Dancing

Dance the New Year in with the first Sacred Circle Dance of 2016 on Sunday, January 10, 6-8 pm in Scott Hall. 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.



## WomenCircle

Meets Tuesday, January 19 at 7:15 pm in the Memorial 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](mailto:blauaugen@comcast.net).

## Meditation

Informal meditation, drop in, donations welcome to help support First Parish.

- 7 pm, Wednesdays in the Memorial Room  
Half hour seated meditation.
- 9-10am, Fridays in the Memorial Room.  
Simple silence and perhaps a short reading.

## Spirituality Book Group

The spirituality book group will be discussing *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* by Harold Kushner on Tuesday, January 26 at 7:15 pm in the Memorial room. All welcome! Contact Julia Schneiderman at [jsandjw@verizon.net](mailto:jsandjw@verizon.net) for questions.

## Yoga at First Parish continues!

Whether you are an experienced yogi or have never taken a yoga class, you are welcome here! Yoga is the union of mind, body and spirit and is open to all. If you would like to gain greater strength and flexibility, are in search of physical or emotional healing, or are on a quest for a deeper understanding of life and of yourself, yoga might be for you. Yoga postures, alignment, breathing techniques, and paths to relaxation will be

explored. Modifications and props will be provided. Perfectionism and judgement will be left at the door as you engage your mind, body, and spirit in this venture into health and well-being!

Julie Porter is the instructor. Dates and times are:

- Monday evenings for 6 sessions from January 4 to February 22 (skipping 2 Monday holidays) at 7:30 to 8:45 p.m. Come unwind from your day and be energized for the rest of the week! The fee is \$60.
- Tuesday mornings for 8 sessions from January 5 to February 23 at 9:15 to 10:30 a.m. Come relax and energize yourself for the rest of the week! The fee is \$80.

Drop-in rate for a class is \$13. Please contact Julie ahead of time if you plan to drop in.

Please bring a yoga mat if you have one.

Contact Julie Porter at [portgriff@comcast.net](mailto:portgriff@comcast.net) to register. Feel free to call her at 508-655-9641 with any questions or concerns.

*Note – if you are currently taking a yoga class with Julie, you don't need to fill out another registration form. Just let her know that you are continuing.*



## 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.



# JANUARY 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 <b>New Year's Day</b> <i>Office Closed</i>	2 9, ESL. 110 Edgell
3 10 Worship, MH 11 YRUU Bake Sale, Scott Hall 6p YRUU, Huntley and Cave	4 5:30p Free Med. Program, 110 Edgell 6:30 p, ESL, 110 Edgell Rd 7p, Rounds, SH 7 p Bell Choir Rehearsal, MH 7:30p Yoga, Huntley	5 9:15 Yoga, Huntley 6p, ESL, 110 Edgell 7:30p Heritage Chorale, SH	6 10:30 ESL, 110 Edgell Rd 6p ESL, 110 Edgell 6p 350.org, Scott Hall 6p, Wellspring Wednesday, Huntley 7p Meditation, Memorial Rm 7:30p Choir, MH	7 8 Coffee & Muffins: Huntley 6:30p JYG, Huntley 7p Fairs & Squares, Scott Hall	8 9 Meditation, Memorial Room 8pm UnCommon Coffee House, Scott Hall	9 9, ESL. 110 Edgell Private Rental, Scott Hall 9-4p, Huntley 10-2p, Olympia Brown Rm 2-3 p 7p, Fairs & Squares
10 10 Worship, MH 11am JYG Bake Sale 11:15 Getting to Know You Coffee, Memorial Rm 11:30 SJCC, Huntley 6p Sacred Circle Dance, Scott Hall 6 p YRUU, Huntley, Cave	11 12p Women's Alliance, Huntley 5:30p Free Medi- cal Program, 6:30 ESL 110 Edgell, 7p, Rounds, SH 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal, MH 7:30p Yoga, Huntley 7:30p Brain- storming, Memori- al Room	12 9:15 Yoga, Huntley 1p Stitches in Time, Memorial Room 6p, ESL, 110 Edgell 7p FCNS Board mtg, Huntley 7:30p Heritage Chorale, SH	13 10:30, ESL, 110 Edgell Rd 6p ESL, 110 Edgell 6:30p, OUT Metro- West NEXUS Scott Hall 6:30p PFLAG, Huntley Room 7p Meditation, Memorial Rm 7:30 p Choir, MH	14 8 Coffee & Muffins, Huntley 5:30p Free Medical Program, 110 Edgell 7p BoA, Huntley 7p Fairs & Squares, Scott Hall	15 9 Meditation, Memorial Room	16 9 ESL. 110 Edgell Private Rental, Scott Hall 9-4p, Huntley 10-2p, Olympia Brown Rm 2-3 p
17 10 Worship Service, Meeting House 11 Gratitude Recep- tion, Memorial Rm. 11:30, Spanish Conversation Club, Servetus Rm 6p YRUU, Huntley, Cave	18 <b>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</b> <i>Office Closed</i> 5:30 p Free Medi- cal Program, 110 Edgell 6:30 p, ESL, 110 Edgell Rd 7 p Bell Choir Rehearsal, MH 7p, Rounds, Scott Hall	19 9:15 Yoga, Huntley 6p, ESL, 110 Edgell 7:15p, WomenCir- cle, Memorial Rm 7:30p Heritage Chorale, SH	20 10:30 , ESL, 110 Edgell Rd 6p ESL, 110 Edgell 7p, Finance Council, Huntley Room 7p Meditation, Memorial Rm 7:30 p Choir, MH	21 8 Coffee & Muffins, Huntley 5:30p Free Medical Program, 110 Edgell 6:30p JYG, Huntley <b>7p Congregational Meeting, MH</b> 7:30 Fairs & Squares, Scott Hall	22 9 Meditation, Memorial Room	23 9 ESL. 110 Edgell Private Rental, Scott Hall 9-4p, Huntley 10-2p, Olympia Brown Rm 2-3 p
24 10 Worship Service, Meeting House 11:30 RE Teacher Brunch, Huntley 11:45 Newcomer Orientation, Memorial Room 4p OWL, Huntley 6 p YRUU, Huntley, Cave	25 5:30 p Free Medi- cal Program, 110 Edgell 5:30p FCNS, Olympia 6:30 p ESL, 110 Edgell Rd 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal, MH 7p, Rounds, SH 7:30p Yoga, Huntley	26 9:15 Yoga, Huntley 1p Stitches in Time, Memorial Room 6p, ESL, 110 Edgell 7:15p Book Grp, Memorial Rm 7:30p Heritage Chorale, SH	27 10:30 , ESL, 110 Edgell Rd 6p ESL, 110 Edgell 7p Meditation, Memorial Rm 7:30p Choir, MH	28 8 Coffee & Muffins, Huntley 5:30p FCNS, kitchen 7p BoA, Huntley 7p Fairs & Squares, Scott Hall	29 9 Meditation, Memorial Room 5:30p FCNS Pasta Dinner, Scott Hall and kitchen	30 9 ESL. 110 Edgell Private Rental, Scott Hall 9-4p, Huntley 10-2p, Olympia Brown Rm 2-3 p
31 10 Worship Service, Meeting House 11 Gratitude Recep- tion, Memorial Room 11:30 CAT, Huntley 6 p YRUU, Huntley, Cave						

The First Parish In Framingham  
Unitarian Universalist  
*A Welcoming Congregation*  
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