

The Steeple



VOL 11 NO. 3 March 1, 2017

First Parish in Framingham
Unitarian Universalist
A Welcoming Congregation

Monthly Reflection Theme: Vulnerability

Minister's Column

"The opposite of love is not hate, it is indifference".

Elie Wiesel

So many are doing so much. It is impressive. And, I am hearing people say that they are tired, or anxious, or not sleeping well, or overwhelmed. Burnout is a real thing when it comes to activism.

A Few Tips To Avoid "Activism Fatigue"

- ◆ Limit the time you spend on news every day. No one can know it all or save it all. It can become an actual toxic addiction.
- ◆ Limit the number of "isn't it awful?" conversations you participate in.
- ◆ Pick the areas of activism you want to focus on, and let the rest go. *see below
- ◆ Avoid demonizing individual people and focus on the issues.
- ◆ Strengthen your "Coping Bank." Take sanctuary in nature, laughter, music, in rest, friendship, meditation, exercise, reading, children, community, or whatever helps you stay balanced and refreshed.

"Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is an act of self-preservation and an act of political warfare."

Audre Lord

*The First Parish "Witness Web" can be accessed in Google Plus. It was developed to order the chaos of activism possibilities. There you will find 11 tracked issues: immigration, health care, climate change, women's rights', LBGTQ rights, nuclear arms, Islamophobia, education, racial justice, economics, civil liberties, and government. You can look at all of the posts or just a few (use the filter option). There are people in Scott Hall after services to help you join, and clear instructions once you are on the site. Spread the word! Open to all!

With Great Respect,
Kathleen

Sunday Worship Services

March 5, 10am

A Story-Full Love Letter From Your Minister
This is the middle of my tenth year as your minister. This is the second Sunday of our Stewardship Drive. This is a story-full love letter to you. Lunch for all after the service.

March 12, 10am

Salad Word Sermon: An Exercise in Bringing Order Out of Chaos (Or Not!)

The Reverend Kathleen Hepler

Last spring auction, (it's Saturday April 29th this year!) twenty people bought one word for a sermon. Rev. Hepler has 21 words that somehow have to fit in one sermon. Can this have anything to do with what is going on in our world? Here are some of the words:

Acrimonious, boll weevil, boycott, courage, God, gratitude, healing, kerfuffle, memories, operatic, panache, Peloponnesian, polyamory, resistance, serendipitous, sesame, tennis, trees and tolerance.

March 19, 10am

Present, Not Perfect

The Reverend Kathleen Hepler

Reflections on deepening our church community.

March 26, 10am

Words and Music

The Worship and Arts Committee presents a service of music and story, with Doug Sondak on flute, Diane Engel on piano. They are joined by writer and storyteller Bob King in a service including a suite for flute and piano by the mid-20th century Polish/Russian composer Mieczyslaw Weinberg. Bob will tell his story, a tale for all ages, in tandem with the music.

From the Board of Assessors Spring Auction, April 29

Four years ago, when I was asked to serve on the Board of Assessors, I wasn't sure I had been at First Parish long enough. But I knew that it is often difficult to recruit members for this, so I agreed.

There are two parts of my Board experience which have made this time special: getting to know the wonderful people on the Board; and learning how our church accomplishes so much.

I have been amazed at the respectful tone among the Board members. I never experienced a flared temper or a push for a personal agenda. The Board took its responsibilities seriously, improving transparency in decision making and raising the level of trust. There have been difficult decisions, bringing me to ask, "But how do we know which is the right decision?" The answer was, "The wisdom of the group," one of the concepts in our covenant.

I watched the collection of affiliated and working groups shaped into a new organizational chart. The By-laws and Rules reflect current practice. We've struggled to set up feedback loops through the Committee on Congregational Ministry to be more inclusive. We've moved from discussions of details to a balance of management and vision.

We are blessed to have a wide variety of members represented: middle-aged to old-age (still need younger members); members who were born into the church and those with only a few years of membership; "numbers" people and visionaries; marketing and personnel experts; and those who bring wisdom and support. I enjoyed my experience so much, that I signed on for an additional year, when that was needed. I think you, too, will enjoy a tour on the Board. If you are interested in serving, please speak to a Board member or a member of the Nominating Committee.

Robin Hegvik, Chair, Board of Assessors

From the Canvass Committee

Join us on March 5 after the service for a luncheon in Scott Hall. Everyone is welcome. You will have the opportunity to talk with board members about the church budget, get to know members and visitors. It will also be an opportunity to fill out your pledge card. We'd like to get all the pledge cards back by March 12, so we can start planning the budget for next year.

Looking for Treasures

Spring cleaning is right around the corner. Keep our auction in mind, looking :

- New, unwanted gifts
- New kitchen "toys" never used
- Lovely vases you do not need
- Unused gift certificates
- Wines you never cared for
- AND any other treasure someone else will love to have.



If you have any questions, e-mail Debbie Doucette at debradoucette@verizon.net or call 508-624-9664. Also, if you can visit 3-4 businesses, seeking gift certificates, contact Ruth Decker at 508-877-6992 or ruth.decker@verizon.net. Help is needed.

Seeking Raffle Baskets



The Annual Talent and Treasure Auction is seeking donations of raffle baskets from anyone, including committees and groups. These baskets are a fun part of the auction. Kids love being able to put tickets into the baskets!

Past baskets have included – Movie Night (DVDs, movie tickets, popcorn, etc.), Outdoor Fun (kites, bubbles, chalk, etc.), Handy Man (tools, bucket, gift certificate to hardware store, etc.), Tea Time (teas, tea cups, tea towels, biscuits), Pets (cat/dog toys, grooming tools, etc.). Don't worry if you don't have something to put the items in, that can be done for you. Completed baskets or basket items need to be collected by April 9, 2017. Contact Valerie Packard (valpack13@gmail.com, 508-628-0170) for info.

Music Notes



Did you enjoy the wonderful music at the Christmas Eve service? It sounded particularly festive on our freshly tuned organ. Our pipe organ got its annual tuning in time for Christmas Eve by Andover Organ. The other concern was whether a cipher might emerge. Parishioner Dick Rader kindly volunteered to be on call for both Christmas Eve services to try to fix any new ciphers. Fortunately, no fix was needed. We thank Dick for being willing to stay on call so we could plan to use the organ on Christmas Eve!

Religious Exploration

Brené Brown, a researcher and professor, has been studying human connection for over a decade. It turns out those who feel the most connected are those who are most vulnerable - to life, to being open to connection, to love. She says: "I want our home to be a place where we can be our bravest selves and most fearful selves. Where we practice difficult conversations and share our shaming moments from school or work." When we practice vulnerability and model it for each other, we encourage our children to be their most creative, loving and connected selves.

It turns out, kids are far better at being vulnerable than we are. They certainly have a lot more practice at exposing themselves to new experiences, gaining new skills, and the possibility of failure - opportunities that we as adults often opt out of as we lead a more secure life having "figured out" all that "stuff" before. If we are willing to take the leap however, especially in our own homes, and lean into that failure of trying a new skill, or opening ourselves up to the risk of loving fully without reservation, we set our children up for a lifetime of possibility.

How do we practice vulnerability? Try a new skill, painting or making sushi, or Tai Chi, and talk about the process and struggle with your family. Pick up the phone and call someone you've felt disconnected with and be prepared to listen and share your own life with them. Or invite them over for coffee. Talk to your children about the struggles that you face. So often we present a veneer of perfection even to our own family. What looks like magic to our children (the laundry makes it from the floor back to their drawer!) is real honest work that they should know about and practice themselves.

Here are a few great books to open the conversation about being vulnerable with your family, and one great [Ted Talk](#) by the aforementioned Brené Brown.

<https://www.ted.com/talks/>

Giraffes Can't Dance by Giles Andreae: Giraffe



watches wistfully as the jungle dance brings out all the animals and their waltzes, break dances, and ballets. With his long wobbly legs and impossible neck, he is quite sure he cannot dance. But in the quiet moonlight on his way home, the beat of the jungle around him makes his toes start tapping, and before long, he has created a dance all his own. All the animals stop to watch and cheer! By trusting his own body, he learns that he can do whatever he puts his mind to.

If I Never Forever Endeavor by Holly Meade: This



poetic book poses the question - if I never leave my nest and try new things, can I be happy? Leaving the warmth and safety of home seems too risky for this fledgling, what if he tries and fails?

A Bad Case of Stripes by David Shannon: Camilla



Cream is a very worried child. On the first day of school, what if everyone finds out that she loves lima beans? She chooses her outfit and heads to bed, only to wake up with a bad case of stripes. Stripes so bad that they change by mere suggestion. Stripes so bad she is sent home from school. Stripes so bad that no doctor can seem to find the cure! The secret to curing her stripes? Admitting to herself, and to everyone, that loving lima beans is no big deal, and we can all be who we really want to be!

Get out there and be vulnerable! And share it, because that is how we get more connected.

UU Urban Ministry

Share the Plate

Sunday, March 12

Your support is vital for the needs of the Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry! This organization is grounded in UU values and committed to justice. Their headquarters are nearby in Roxbury.

- ◆ Renewal House is a domestic violence shelter with services to help residents transition to an independent life.
- ◆ Roxbury Youth Programs offers weekday assistance with college preparation, tutoring, and dinner.
- ◆ Explorers Club offers enrichment activities for elementary school age children on some Saturdays, and summer camp.
- ◆ Jericho Road Roxbury connects high level volunteer talent with small nonprofits doing great work in Roxbury. These programs help enable students to learn valuable skills, teamwork, and acceptance to college.

If donating by check, please make it payable to First Parish in Framingham and on the memo line write: UU Urban Ministry. Thank you for your support!

Volunteers Needed

Are you creative and organized? Our UU Urban Ministry group, here at First Parish, is looking for an activities coordinator. Once a year you coordinate an activity that our group could do with a group at UU Urban Ministry. We also need helpers on our committee. This is very rewarding volunteer work.

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 March Coordinator is Julie Porter who can be reached at portgriff@verizon.net or 508-655-9641.

+ Alma Gould is home recovering from her fall at the end of January when she hurt her knee. Cards are always appreciated and may be mailed to 48 Roy Avenue, Holliston, MA 01746.

+ Shirley Kabler is home from rehab after having major surgery. She and Rhonna are grateful for the support and wonderful meals they have received from First Parish. It has meant a great deal to both of them. Get well cards would be welcomed and can be sent to 26 Donna Road, Framingham, MA 01701.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

The Climate Action team has set up a **Freecycle Bulletin Board** on the wall on your left as you enter Scott Hall. It has four designated areas for posts : Free Stuff, Wanted, For Sale , Services.

Please use this board to keep used materials out of the waste stream.

Programs & Announcements

Wellspring Wednesday

The First Wednesday of the Month

Join us on March 1 for a potluck at 6pm in the Huntley Room. Bring a dish to share, or pay \$5 at the door. For more information, contact Margaret Krell at mkrell56@aol.com. Since people have expressed interest in the Legislative Forum (below), we will forgo our documentary this month so folks may attend the forum.

It's Our Future:

Environmental Legislative Forum

The First Parish Climate Action Team and the MetroWest Node of 350 MA are holding an educational forum on Wednesday, March 1 at 7pm in Scott Hall. Learn about the large number of "green" bills for the 2017-2018 legislative session. Six prominent MetroWest legislators are committed to attending this event, and other are invited. The bills range from utilizing wind power to providing solar power for low income communities.

Women's Alliance

The Women's Alliance will meet March 13 at noon in the Huntley Room. Janet Nichols will present: "History of the Church and Who Owns the Common." Bring a sandwich; tea and coffee will be served.

—Susie MacDonald. 508-875-3322



"Framingham Common in 1808" by Captain Daniel Bell

Immigrant Rights Presentation

The MetroWest Free Medical Program is sponsoring an Immigrant Rights presentation at First Parish, in the Meetinghouse, on Thursday, March 9 from 7- 8:30pm. As a nonprofit organization we do not take a political stance. However, we are aware that with the new administration changes are happening that will impact immigrants living in our communities. We want to ensure that patients from these communities continue to be able to come to us and feel that they are in a safe environment in their communities and at the clinic. We would like to invite anyone from First Parish who is interested in immigrant rights to attend this forum.

The meeting will include a presentation from Alex Carroll, an attorney with the American Immigration Lawyers Association and her colleagues from Framingham:

- *Know Your Rights* information. This will help us all understand a person's rights if approached by an immigration official. For example, it is not mandatory to open the door to your home if an immigration agent knocks, unless there is an actual arrest warrant.
- Current executive orders—what could change, and how these could be enforced or challenged. We have been hearing from patients that there is increased fear in immigrant communities, and daily news reports, some sensationalist, some speculative, some frighteningly accurate make it difficult to know how to respond. This presentation will give some perspective on how to understand what we read and hear.

Program and Announcements

Sacred Circle Dancing

Sunday, March 12 from 6 to 8 pm in Scott Hall. No partner, experience, or RSVP needed. All dances taught; some live music. A free will donation of \$5-\$10 to help defray First Parish expenses will be appreciated. For more information, contact First Parish member Marilyn Engels 781-779-1370.



WomenCircle

Meets Tuesday, March 21 at 7 pm in the Huntley Room. This group meets monthly for discussion and exploration of women's spirituality. All First Parish women are welcome; for more info, contact Marianne Orlando marianne.orlando@verizon.net.

Meditation

- 7pm, Mondays in the Memorial Room, informal
- 9am, Fridays in the Memorial Room, informal.
Wednesday evening meditation with Joti Royster will return in April.

Eckhart Tolle Evening

A video of Eckhart Tolle speaking on various aspects of mindfulness and spirituality is shown each Wednesday evening at 7, followed by some discussion. This group meets in the Memorial Room, and is facilitated by Kathy Ward. Donations welcome.

Spirituality Book Group

Will meet Tuesday, March 7, 7:15 pm – 8:30 pm, in the Memorial Room. The book that we will be discussing is *Advice on Dying and Living a Better Life* by the Dalai Lama. Newcomers to the group are most welcome. If you have any questions, please contact Daryl Hess at 508-494-3423 or daryl.hess@verizon.net

SAVE THE DATE—UnCommon Coffee House

April 7, 7pm Joel Cage

April 28, 8pm John Davidson

The UnCommon Coffee House will present these musicians in Scott Hall. More information is available at www.uncommoncoffeehouse.org and will be printed in the April newsletter.



Yoga at First Parish

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. If you would like to gain greater strength and flexibility or are in search of physical or emotional healing, yoga might just be the practice for you.

Instructor: Julie Porter. Classes: Huntley Room.

Monday evenings, 7 to 8:45 pm for seven weeks: March 6 through April 24 (no classes on holidays). Unwind from your day! Fee for series is \$70.

Tuesday mornings, 9:15 to 10:30am for 8 weeks, March 7 through April 25. Energize yourself for the rest of the week! Fee for the series is \$80.

Drop-in rate for a class is \$13.

Please bring a yoga mat if you have one. Props will be provided. Contact Julie Porter at portgriff@comcast.net for a registration form if you are new to the class, or let her know you are continuing. Call her at 508-655-9641 with any questions.

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 Debra Doucette.



MARCH 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 11am ESL, 110 Edgell Rd 6pm ESL, 110 Edgell 6p Wellspring Wednesday, Huntley 7p Choir Rehearsal, Meeting House 7p Environmental-Forum, Scott Hall	2 8 Coffee & Muffins, Huntley 5:30p Free Medical Program, 110 Edgell 7p Fairs & Squares, Scott Hall 7pm Eckhart Tolle Evening, Memorial Room	3 9 Meditation, Memorial Room	4 9am ESL, 110 Edgell Road
5 9:15 Children's Choir Rehearsal, Meeting House 10 Worship Service, Meeting House 11 Stewardship Lunch, Scott Hall 11 Bake Sale, Scott Hall 6p YRUU, Cave	6 5:30p FCNS, Olympia Brown Room 5:30p Free Medical Program, 6pm ESL, 110 Edgell Rd 7p Rounds, SH 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal, MH 7p Meditation, Memorial Room 7:30p Yoga, Huntley	7 9:15 Yoga, Huntley 6p ESL, 110 Edgell 7:15p Spirituality Book Club, Memorial Room 7:30p Heritage Chorale, Scott Hall	8 11am ESL, 110 Edgell Rd 1p Stitches in Time, Memorial Room 6pm ESL, 110 Edgell 6:30p, OUT Metro-West NEXUS Scott Hall 6:30p PFLAG, Huntley Room 7p Choir Rehearsal, Meeting House	9 8 Coffee & Muffins, Scott Hall 5:30p Free Medical Program, 110 Edgell 6:30p JYG, Olympia Brown 7p Fairs & Squares, Scott Hall 7p BoA, Huntley 7p Eckhart Tolle Evening, Memorial Room 7p Immigrant Rights, Meetinghouse	10 9 Meditation, Memorial Room	11 9am ESL, 110 Edgell Road 10 NE UU Training, Scott Hall 7p Fairs & Squares, Scott Hall
12 9:15 Children's Choir Rehearsal, Olympia Brown 10 Worship Service, Meeting House 11:15 SJCC, Huntley 6p YRUU, Cave 6p Sacred Circle, Scott Hall	13 11:30 Women's Alliance, Huntley 5:30p Free Medical Program, 6pm ESL 110 Edgell Rd 7p Rounds, Scott Hall 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal, MH 7p Meditation, Memorial Room 7:30p Yoga, Huntley	14 9:15 Yoga, Huntley 6p ESL, 110 Edgell 7p FCNS, Huntley Room 7p Finance Council, Memorial Room 7:30p Heritage Chorale, Scott Hall	15 11am ESL, 110 Edgell Rd 6pm ESL, 110 Edgell 6:30 Umbrella, Scott Hall 7p Choir Rehearsal, Meeting House	16 8 Coffee & Muffins, Huntley 5:30p Free Medical Program, 110 Edgell 7p Fairs & Squares, Scott Hall 7pm Eckhart Tolle Evening, Memorial Room	17 9 Meditation, Memorial Room	18 9am ESL, 110 Edgell Road 4pm Private Rental, Scott Hall
19 9:15 Children's Choir Rehearsal, Olympia Brown 10 Worship Service, Meeting House 6p YRUU, Cave	20 5:30p Free Medical Program, 6pm ESL 110 Edgell Rd 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal, MH 7p Meditation, Memorial Room 7p Rounds, Scott Hall 7:30p Yoga, Huntley	21 9:15 Yoga, Huntley 6p ESL, 110 Edgell 6:30p Parents and Others Group, Memorial Room 7p WomenCircle, Huntley Room 7:30p Heritage Chorale, Scott Hall	22 11am ESL, 110 Edgell Rd 12:45 Covenant Group, Memorial Rm 1p Stitches in Time, Memorial Room 6pm ESL, 110 Edgell 7p Choir Rehearsal, Meeting House 7p Mass Mothers of Twins, Scott Hall	23 8 Coffee & Muffins, Huntley 5:30p Free Medical Program, 110 Edgell 6:30p JYG, Olympia Brown 7p Fairs & Squares, Scott Hall 7pm Eckhart Tolle Evening, Memorial Room	24 9 Meditation, Memorial Room	25 9am ESL, 110 Edgell Road 10am Rehearsal, Meetinghouse
26 9:15 Children's Choir Rehearsal, Olympia Brown 10 Worship Service, Meeting House 11:30 CAT, Huntley 6p YRUU, Cave	27 5:30p Free Medical Program, 6pm ESL, 110 Edgell Rd 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal, MH 7p Meditation, Memorial Room 7p Rounds, SH 7:30p Yoga, Huntley	28 9:15 Yoga, Huntley 6p ESL, 110 Edgell 7:30p Heritage Chorale, Scott Hall	29 11am ESL, 110 Edgell Rd 6pm ESL, 110 Edgell 7p Choir Rehearsal, Meeting House	30 8 Coffee & Muffins, Huntley 5:30p Free Medical Program, 110 Edgell 7p Fairs & Squares, Scott Hall 7pm Eckhart Tolle Evening, Memorial Room	31 9 Meditation, Memorial Room	

The First Parish In Framingham
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A Welcoming Congregation
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