

***Wherever you are in your spiritual journey,
you are welcome here.***



**Everyone is
Welcome!**



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office@walthamuu.org | www.walthamuu.org**



Theme for the Month: Finding Our Center

Please sign up for roles on Sunday morning - greeters, coffee makers, sound engineers, camera operators, Zoom hosts by clicking on the link **here**.

If you would like to join virtually, see the email distribution on Thursday afternoon, or email **office@walthamuu.org** for login instructions.

**Sunday Worship - January 8, 2023
10:30 AM**

**"Un-Knowing: How What We Know, and Don't Know,
Can Get Us Lost"
Deborah Weiner preaching**

This month in worship we focus on 'finding our center' - which calls us to discernment and connection to what we know to be true. Truth has been a shaky proposition in recent years: one person's version of 'truth' might be pretty different from another's...and not having the wisdom, or the grounding, to know what is actually true can lead us to confusion and sometimes, trouble. We'll explore this conundrum in Sunday's worship service, and we'll be blessed by the music of Donnell Patterson's Joyful Voices of Inspiration - a real cause for celebration. See you in church!



**Covid Safety at Church -
Please Help Us All Fight Respiratory Infections**

Due to the rise of respiratory viruses, including Covid-19, we strongly encourage the First Parish in Waltham community to wear masks while at church, except as needed for eating or drinking, through January 22. This request follows similar requests being made to public school systems in our area following the holiday break. We will continue to offer every other row seating in the sanctuary on the left side of the sanctuary (where masks are mandatory). Worship leaders will be self-testing prior to participating in

worship; we appreciate your commitment to the health of our community!

- The FP Waltham Covid Response Team and Board of Managers

“For This Time” - Thoughts from Deborah Weiner Transitional Ministry Associate

Turning the Page

I have to confess that New Year’s celebrations don’t do much for me: too often I think it’s an occasion, promoted by Champagne distributors and (the day after) exercise and diet companies, that is meant to motivate us to over-imbibe or over-eat, and then, wracked with guilt and sometimes self-loathing, we trudge off to the gym or start eating what my friend, Kirsten, called “tuna death” (ask me if you want to know more!)

I lean more toward the Jewish High Holidays, with celebrations of Rosh Hashanah to welcome in the new year, and followed by days of contemplation and action, to atone (or at least, address) the ways in which we might have fallen short of our expectations, or had a falling out with others. But now, in January, the calendar informs us that the page has turned.

While I’m not much for resolutions either I do hope that in this young new year you will take a little time to consider what First Parish in Waltham means for you - the ways in which you have been nurtured, have made friends, perhaps have been disappointed too (since this is also a part of relationships), have found a spiritual home here. This house of memory and hope needs you - all of you - to be whole, to be a place of love and care and deep faith.

Last week I named three ways in which I hoped you might be moved to add your support and energies to nurture this congregation. Let me briefly mention them again here:

~ *Sunday morning hospitality and greeting:* offering a warm welcome to visitors and newcomers. Please contact [Martha Gallagher](#) to say ‘yes’ to this opportunity!

~ *Stewarding the care of the church’s facilities and grounds.* Please contact [Dan Taylor](#) to say you’ll join this team.

~ *Supporting a vital church community for ALL ages by helping to lead religious education programs as part of a team.* [Please reach out to Pam Penton](#) to say you want to be that person!

What will each of us do with this life, this time, we have been given? My friend, the Rev. Andrea LaSonde Anastos, marks this time with these words:

May this circuit of the sun mark a rising from dreams
to the work of building a new reality.

May this circuit mark the transformation of strangers into allies,
and enemies into mentors of growth.

May this circuit inspire us to take what we have pushed to the margins,
fold it into the center, and awaken us to wild possibilities.

May this circuit be the one when what we have taken for granted,
bathes us in fresh awareness, and sparks unimagined joy.

May we honor our questions, and respect our doubts.

May our journey offer startling vistas and restful oases.

May our presence be strong sanctuary for those in need.

May our vocation sustain us and our hopes challenge us.

May it be so.

With gratitude for each of you,
Faithfully,
Deb

From the Music and Choir Director: Happy New Year!?

While this is portrayed as a time of cheer, and new beginnings, you might not be ‘feeling it’. And that is perfectly acceptable.

It is a known phenomenon that we like to listen to sad songs when we are not feeling our happiest - we can find solace in the fact that we are not alone in our misery. With that in mind, I have chosen *Lowside Blues* by Joanna MacGregor for our Prelude. Though MacGregor is an English composer, she was inspired to compose the piece while driving up Highway 61 through Louisiana and Mississippi. It is intended to sound somewhat 'bumpy' in places and explores most of the notes on the piano.



Then, to change the mood completely and help lift any spirits that need it, we will be joined in worship by Joyful Voices of Inspiration. If you've yet to hear them (they have not been heard much for the last couple of years - I can't think why!) you are in for a real treat. As quoted on their website, they have been "Bringing great black gospel music to Metro Boston, Massachusetts, and the world for 24 years."

You may have identified the links between the two types of music - both are American, and were originally associated with people of color. Why are they being performed in our predominantly white church? Because the music is awesome. Many of us cook pasta but do not worry about cultural appropriation while doing so. Some of us enjoy listening to Bach, but are not German. Let us listen to this music and give it the recognition it deserves. It is full of interestingly rich harmonies, catchy repetitive melodies, and driving rhythms. It was originally performed by people who found it hard to 'feel the joy in life'. Hopefully, even if you start the service feeling that way you will be leaving with a skip in your step and a tune or two in your head. If not, Rev Becky and Deb are only a phone call or email away. No trouble is too small - they want to hear them all.



Tuneful Tuesdays

Join **Emma Campbell**, our Music and Choir Director, for an hour of musical exploration on the third Tuesday of each month.

The sessions are aimed at those with little prior knowledge and are open to all.

This month there will be the opportunity to visit The Hebrides, an archipelago of the west coast of Scotland.

While the activities start at **1pm**, feel free to arrive earlier and share a brown bag lunch with others.

From Bethany Templeton-Klem: Commissioner of Music and Worship

In November, the Board of Managers allocated funding to commemorate our congregation's 325th anniversary. The artist, Ryan Schmidt from Kansas City, Missouri, was first commissioned by UU churches to design a flaming chalice--the uniting symbol of our faith community. It's a pleasure to announce that the chalice has been completed and will soon share its grace and light during our services.



Friendship Finders & UU Explorers

January 2023

Sunday, January 1st: No class

Sunday, January 8th: Begin Study of the Path of Finding our Center and 5th Principle

Sunday, January 15th: Start the 30 Days of Love and 5th Principle

Sunday, January 22nd: Continued Study of the Path of Finding our Center and 6th Principle

Saturday, January 28th: All Ages Public Skating
2:00-3:50 at the Veterans Memorial Rink

Sunday, January 29th Continued Study of the Path of Finding our Center and 6th Principle



Holiday Marketplace - Thanks

The holiday marketplace has raised just over \$1,600! Many thanks to those who donated items to be sold: Daphne Blount, Kris DiNardo, Elisse Ghitelman, Leslie Gildersleeve, Annie Jose, Plum Kennard, Karen Klein, Bethany Klem, Nancy Lawrence, Rachel Learned, Joan Smith, Barry Stearns, Dan Taylor, Donna VanderClock and the Clothing Exchange. And thanks to all of you who did some of your holiday shopping at the marketplace!

News Flashes!!

The **Waltham Clothing Exchange** closes its current season with the Clearance Sale on Tuesday, Jan 10 from 10 to 1. Clothing, household items, toys, stuffed animals, hardware, electronics, and more at ridiculous prices! If you can't make it, tell a friend! The Spring Season will start February 14. Visit the Waltham Clothing Exchange, you will love it!

The **First Parish fundraising auction** will be happening again in early February, first online and then culminating with an in-person event on Saturday, February 11. If you are particularly interested in a getaway this summer, we've got word that the Weddigs are again donating their New Hampshire vacation week in August! For those who like to plan ahead, the week will be August 13-20 only, at the Cathedral Ledge Resort - a two bedroom timeshare condo with a loft, sleeping 6-8. For more info: <https://www.cathedralledgeresort.com/>
The starting bid is \$750, renting from the resort for that week is normally \$2700! Stay tuned for more auction promos in coming weeks!

If you missed the last **transitions meeting** (on December 11, 2022) which focused on Mission, or want to refresh your memory of what was discussed, you can see a **video** by clicking on this link: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1synVFw0T0jmvzXPi60saW6LGI6pWfHAF/view?usp=sharing>

Save the date

Transitions Workshop #3:

"This is a Promise I Will Keep" - A Workshop Exploring Behavioral Covenants and Mission

Sunday, January 29, 12 noon - 3:00 PM

Whitcomb Hall

Lunch will be served; child care available by advance request. To sign up, please click [here](#).



From the Adult RE Group:

The Martin Luther King Jr. Day federal holiday on Monday, January 16th, is not just a "day off", but also a "day on". It has come to be honored as a National Day of Service, when people across the country step up to make communities more equitable and take action to create the Beloved Community of Dr. King's dream. His legacy is our call to action. If you're looking for a way for you and loved ones to help in a meaningful way, here's a list of local opportunities to listen, learn, and participate in building the Beloved Community.

Boston Cares 18th Annual MLK Service

Event: <https://www.bostoncares.org/mlkday> provides an overview of 9 different ways to make a meaningful difference, including learning, in-person volunteering, and donating.

Cambridge MLK Day of service - sign up for more information:

<https://manyhelpinghands365.org/the-2023-cambridge-mlk-day-of-service/>

AmeriCorps Volunteer Opportunities allows you to search by zip code and at the moment includes several opportunities to support Waltham's Families for Depression Awareness, a former Jones Partnership awardee:

<https://americorps.gov/join/find-volunteer-opportunity#/search>

Teach for America has a list of volunteer ideas:

<https://www.teachforamerica.org/one-day/ideas-and-solutions/19-resources-and-ideas-to-celebrate-the-mlk-day-of-service>

January's Book Club Choice for **Friday 20th at 2pm**

***Mercy Street*, by Jennifer Haigh**

"Ms. Haigh is an expertly nuanced storyteller long overdue for major attention. Her work is gripping, real, and totally immersive, akin to that of writers as different as Richard Price, Richard Ford, and Richard Russo."—Janet Maslin, *New York Times*
The highly praised, "extraordinary" (*New York Times Book Review*) novel about the disparate lives that intersect at a women's clinic in Boston, by *New York Times* bestselling author Jennifer Haigh

For almost a decade, Claudia has counseled patients at Mercy Street, a clinic in the heart of the city. The work is consuming, the unending dramas of women in crisis. For its patients, Mercy Street offers more than health care; for many, it is a second chance. But outside the clinic, the reality is different. Anonymous threats are frequent. A small, determined group of anti-abortion demonstrators appears each morning at its door. As the protests intensify, fear creeps into Claudia's days, a humming anxiety she manages with frequent visits to Timmy, an affable pot dealer in the midst of his own existential crisis. At Timmy's, she encounters a random assortment of customers, including Anthony, a lost soul who spends most of his life online, chatting with the mysterious Excelsior11—the screenname of Victor Prine, an anti-abortion crusader who has set his sights on Mercy

Street and is ready to risk it all for his beliefs. *Mercy Street* is a novel for right now, a story of the polarized American present. Jennifer Haigh, "an expert natural storyteller with a keen sense of her characters' humanity" (*New York Times*), has written a groundbreaking novel, a fearless examination of one of the most divisive issues of our time.



Building a Culture of Inclusion With Paula Cole Jones

Saturday, January 21st
10:00-2:00 on zoom

8th Principle: To affirm and promote journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural beloved community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES:

- To help to create a tipping point of congregational members who understand and support the 8th Principle and see themselves connected to a national movement for greater inclusion in UU communities.
- To introduce strategies for working toward long-term cultural change and to elicit the knowledge of participants about how to engage the congregation.
- To share a framework for how collaboration and accountability shape the racial and social justice history of institutions in the United States.
- To engage participants in an interactive experience of the transformative power of the 8th Principle.

We, Unitarian Universalists, are called to build the Beloved Community. To do that, UUs must attend to the unfinished business of dismantling racism and oppression in our congregations and Association and with our community partners. How do we act in solidarity with the social movements of our times and how do the movements change us?

**For the zoom link, contact Pam Penton at
pam.penton@walthamuu.org**

Monthly Summary of the Meeting of the Board of Managers December 28, 2022

Highlights from the meeting

Pastoral care charter approved.

A "charter" defining the roles, responsibilities, and operations of the pastoral care committee was approved. This document, developed by Deb Weiner and Reverend Becky, sets out the goals that we will strive toward with this important part of our ministry. [Click here to view.](#)

Special congregational meeting to elect GA delegates



On February 5th there will be a special meeting of the congregation to elect this year's GA delegates. Normally this would be done in the spring, but this year the UUA has recommended that delegates are selected early to give them time to be involved with discussions that are happening around changes to Article II of the UUA bylaws. Are you interested in representing our congregation at GA (which will be held this year in Pittsburgh, PA)? More information is available [here](#).

Review of Mission Discovery

The board is in the process of prioritizing and approving improvements to the safety, appearance, and communication displays of the church building that came out of the Mission Discovery event held in the fall. This month tasks for improving bulletin boards, safety information, and congregational information were agreed upon.

Staffing for next year

Discussions are underway to consider all possible options for next year's staffing. Primary among them is our hope to secure an interim minister for the next church year. Stay tuned for updates!

Make an offering plate donation before, during, or after the service!



First Parish
in Waltham

A Welcoming
Unitarian Universalist Congregation

<http://tiny.cc/Donate2FPW>



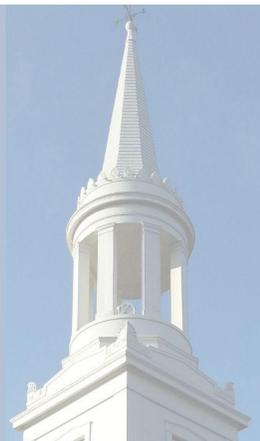
When is Your Birthday?

.....
The Membership Committee is looking to recreate the celebration of birthdays! Whose birthdays? Everyone's birthdays! Yours, your partner's and your children's birthdays. Help us to celebrate each important day. Let us know those important dates. We will add the dates to the newsletter so we can all honor and celebrate our community. Email the dates to Martha Gallagher.

membership.commissioner@walthamuu.org

Light the Steeple

Honor
a person, occasion,
event, or idea

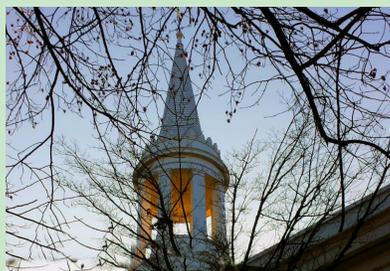


Contact the Office
✉ office@walthamuu.org
☎ 781.893.6240

Happy Birthday this Month to:

Sarah Ramage-Healy 1/2
Emma Campbell 1/8
Scott Tougas 1/12
Charlie Kelley 1/15
Mina Anderson 1/17

Send a card or an email to these members!



The steeple was lit the week of Dec. 25th-31st by **Mary Bergeron** in memory of her brother, and Waltham Firefighter Bobby Bergeron on the anniversary of his death. Let the light shine!"

Ministry Staff Team

Acting Minister

The Rev. Rebecca Sheble-Hall
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Office Manager / Music and Choir Director

Emma Campbell

Revbecky@walthamuu.org

Transitional Ministry Associate

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Pam Penton

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Treasurer

Janet Riley

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Our Church Covenant

Love is the spirit of this church and service its law.

This is our great covenant:

to dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in love, and to help one another.

First Parish in Waltham | 50 Church St., Waltham, MA 02452

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