

**No matter who you are or
where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here.**



**50 Church St, Waltham MA 02452 | 781.893.6240
office@walthamuu.org | www.walthamuu.org**



Upcoming Services

**"Home for the Holidays"
Nov. 26th - 10:30 AM
Led by Rev. Megan Lynes**

Some of us love the holidays, and some of us grit our teeth through the whole season. The poem by Jeredith Merrin, "Family Reunion," names a part of the struggle, while uplifting the beauty and hope of this time as well. Families are complicated. Come explore themes of connection and opportunity, in a room of companions, post-Thanksgiving.

**"Rock of Ages"
December 3rd - 10:30 AM
Led by Deborah Weiner and Reb Ariel Handelman**

As we enter into a time of winter celebrations, there has never been more need for holding a candle in the darkness to light our way into the uncertain future. Reb Ariel Handelman, spiritual leader of B'Nai Or (the Jewish congregation which gathers in our building) will join Deborah Weiner in exploring the need for holding a steadfast vision for our future - filled with light and love.

**For This Time:
Thoughts from Deborah Weiner,
Transitional Ministry Associate**

The Paradox of Celebrations



It was so much fun to see so many of you in worship last Sunday for our all ages "Welcome Table" celebration! The Joyful Voices of Inspiration made the gathering both uplifting and deeply spiritual...and we were able, together, to acknowledge both the challenging and festive parts of a holiday that is recognized by many cultures, while not always with joy.

Next Sunday, Rev. Megan will focus more on the challenges of seasonal celebrations and on December 3, Ariel Handelman - spiritual leader of Congregation B'Nai Or - and I will visit some of the enduring lessons that Hanukkah offers us, particularly in this time where war is raging in parts of the Middle East - and at home.

And what about these holidays? When I was young I loved Thanksgiving as a time to be with family...even though (as I shared on Sunday) not all was lifted from Norman Rockwell's Thanksgiving images. I loved Christmas because of the candles and baubles glittering on the tree; and most of all, the sense of family around me. My father, who was raised an Orthodox Jew, loved these holidays. As a kid, there were days when he was hungry...when the memory of his older sister Freda making My-T-Fine Chocolate Pudding was what constituted a real treat. And when we would talk about holidays, my parents did not forget that they had grown up during a time when homeless folks came to the door looking for food during the Depression; when the bread on the plate had to be covered to keep the rats in the walls of the tenement away.

So it might not be surprising that the Christmas story that I grew up with was "The Gift of the Magi," not the ho-ho-ho cheery jingle bell myth that informed many of our younger lives. In O. Henry's tale, a much-in-love but very poor young couple sell off their most treasured possessions in order to buy one another the Christmas gift of their dreams...only to find, in a cruel twist of fate, that the gifts are related to that which they have sacrificed for one another. They are comforted by being held in love for one another, which is the greatest gift of all.

The paradox of the holidays is the mythic set of expectations that we were either raised with, or have absorbed from the media: the perfect thing, the most wonderful dinner, the brand new car with the big red bow on it (does *anyone* ever really do that, I wonder??) When the glitter is blown away, what is it we really want to be left with? I expect that for most of us, it's a safe place to shelter, a warm meal, and the presence of a few blessed beloveds in our lives.

It is a curious paradox, this contrast between societal expectations and our everyday lives. What will you bring to the metaphorical table, and what do you hope to receive in return? May you find the space to focus on what is truly meaningful and celebratory in these days when you can almost hear sleigh bells ringing in the darkness.

In faith, with love,

Deb



**From the Music and Choir Director:
Emma Campbell**

I find Haydn's music to be generally quite uplifting – he doesn't come in my top 10 composers of all time, but I appreciate the vitality of his piano sonatas and marvel at the incredibly amount of music he composed during his lifetime. I find it odd, therefore, to imagine that life at home could have been anything other than idyllic.

Haydn initially fell in love with Therese Keller, the younger sister of his future wife. Therese had been a pupil of his, but her family had already chosen her destiny to be that of a nun. Haydn was eventually persuaded by the father of the family to marry Maria Anna – it was 5 years before Haydn 'named the day'. Consequently, Haydn was married for nearly 40 years to someone he openly expressed his dislike for. Divorce was not an option in 18th-century Vienna for a Catholic couple. With

this Sunday's service set to explore some of the complexities of relationships within families, it feels appropriate to start the service with a piece by Haydn.

While some composers give us a glimpse of their hearts and souls through their music, I never experience any sense of anger, grief, or discomfort from Haydn. Perhaps that is the power of music to help people overcome their trials.

Here's to hoping that music may help you smooth over some of the irregularities or difficulties in your life. (Time for the helpful reminder that singing with the choir can be joyful and uplifting!)

Yours Musically,
Emma

Church Office Closed Thursday-Friday for the Thanksgiving Holiday

Please plan ahead: our offices will be closed on Thursday and Friday. We hope you enjoy your holiday! For pastoral care emergencies please contact Rev. Megan Lynes or Deborah Weiner.



Here are this years 2023-2024 Board Members!

These are the Board Members of First Parish in Waltham, (plus staff members Deb and Megan.) While they each have their own area of expertise, they are our 'governing body'. They serve the vision and mission of this church, and help guide our congregation to live fully into this promise!

If you have questions, or suggestions, about the operations of the church, please feel free to speak to them during coffee hour, or use their contact details at the bottom of this newsletter.

You can find out more information about our Board Members on our website by clicking [here](#). Or scroll down to the end of this and every newsletter to be reminded of their names and roles.

What are you doing for Thanksgiving, on November 23rd?

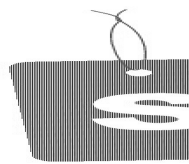
Come and join old friends and new in Whitcomb Hall, as Chaplains on the Way serves breakfast to our housed and un-housed neighbors on Thanksgiving Day itself. Extra helping hands are always welcome. Come anytime between 8am-noon on 11/23. To volunteer your time or food donations, please contact Jill Gauldin. (jill@chaplainsontheway.org).

Holiday Marketplace Returns!

Would you like an easy way to shop for holiday gift items, decorations for your home, or baked goods or other food items for your festive meals? The First Parish Holiday Marketplace is returning soon. This year we'll be operating on

a pop-up basis; you'll be able to shop in person after church on the first 3 Sundays in December.

Will you support First Parish and share your cooking, sewing, crafting or other talents by donating items to be sold? Perhaps you make a really good pie, cookies, cranberry relish, soup or something else that's delicious. We welcome all contributions! And we'd love for you to come shop early and often!



Please email gildersleeveleslie@gmail.com or donnavandercllock@gmail.com if you'd like to donate something to sell. All proceeds will benefit First Parish.

Minister's Discretionary Fund: A little goes a long way.

The First Parish in Waltham Minister's Discretionary Fund Offers financial support to those in our congregation and in the wider Waltham community in times of need.

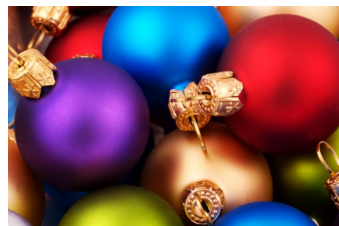
In the last couple months (Sept to Nov) we've been able to help a number of people put food on the table, pay for rent, pay a phone bill, pay for car repairs, purchase clothing for a child in need, and pay for necessities at the end of an unexpected month without work. This is a life giving ministry that comes from all of us because it is how First Parish lives it's mission of creating justice in the world.

Your generosity sustains this fund. It is replenished only when people donate to it directly, (not by an annual pledge for example.) We will invite an offering for this purpose in December, but checks can be made at any time. If you wish to contribute please send a check to First Parish in Waltham, with "Minister's Discretionary Fund" in the memo line, or drop your check in the offering plate during Sunday services.

Thank you for anything you contribute, big or small! Your generosity makes a huge difference.

Deck the Halls! Saturday December 2nd at 2 pm

It's that time again! Come join the holiday festivities and adorn the sanctuary with wreaths and window decorations. All are most welcome whether you've come before or never yet! All materials will be provided. We'll begin at 2 pm and surely finish by 5. Come for all or part of the time.



Depending on the musical gifts of participants, there may even be caroling!

News from the Search Committee:

We're making progress! We completed our last cottage meeting on Sunday. These meetings were attended by more than 30 people; we are so grateful for the thoughtful and respectful conversations.

We have analyzed the long-n-g congregational survey you completed. And here are a few tidbits from the survey not covered at meetings.

- We are an older congregation. Three of every five respondents were at least 65 years old. Only one of every seven was under 50. Four out of five respondents have been attending FPW for more than 10 years.
- Almost three out of five agree we're open to change. However, only two out of five say we have a flexible structure to implement new ideas.
- Disturbingly, only two out of five say we do a good job with difficult conversations and being in right relationship with others. We are glad that working on these issues is a priority for the congregation in this time of transition.

During the 'Beyond Categorical Thinking' workshop, Rev. Amanda Schuber told us how silence can destroy ministries. It's easy to say "oh, just let it go." That just allows the hurt

to continue and nothing changes. We have all said hurtful things without knowing it. We want to give the hurter the chance to make it right, or, if that's not possible, to at least know how to not transgress in the same way in the future. We also want to ensure that our members, friends, clergy, and other staff are not expected to swallow slights and insults.

So if you see something, say something. Sometimes a pointed "oops-ouch" may be sufficient. Sometimes more is required. Similarly, an undercurrent of complaints about a minister can ultimately divide a congregation. Bring the complaints to light. Informing the minister isn't tattling, it allows them to address the issue. And remember that our Committee on Ministry (currently, Bee Fortin - chair, Dmitry Zarkh, Marianne Cutter, and Jodi Anderson) are here to help if you need support.

Rev. Amanda also stressed that a minister who is not practicing good self-care and boundaries is in serious danger of burn-out. We have to nurture our minister.

People at the cottage meetings stressed the importance of role clarity, even while thinking most roles should be shared. Very few roles belong exclusively to the minister. While the minister has the principle responsibility to plan services and write sermons, members would like to participate and make occasional suggestions. This is but one area where shared ministry has an important place in the congregation - and we have more to explore in this area of 'what is yours, what is mine, and what do we do together'?

As we discussed earlier, part of the Search process is confidential. We have been listening to all you have told us and are grateful for all you have shared with us. Know that we are working hard behind the scenes and that we will do our best to keep you informed.

Your Search Committee:

Marty Ahrens (chair), Daphne Blount, Katie Gullotti, Alex Smith Taylor, Bill VanderClock

Questions or comments? Email us at search@walthamuu.org

UU and You!
Dec 3rd, 11:45 am
Harrington Room

Are you new to First Parish in Waltham (or do you feel like you are?) Are you interested in learning more about First Parish and how to get on board the moving train here? Are you seeking a little more info about what Unitarian Universalism is all about?

Come meet with Rev. Megan Lynes and Deb Weiner as well as representatives from our Membership and Hospitality teams over tea and cookies.

Bring your questions, come as you are - all are welcome!

THE WALTHAM PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA PRESENTS

POPS!! A WINTRY MIX OF STRAUSS CLASSICS & SEASONAL FAVORITES

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2023 AT 3:00 PM

Waltham Government Center • 119 School Street • Waltham

•••• MICHAEL KORN, MUSIC DIRECTOR ••••



Lillian Arnold Mages, Soloist



TICKETS SOLD ONLINE ONLY

Tickets are \$20

Seats are Limited

WWW.WPHIL.ORG



One Thing You Can Do

Over the holiday long weekend, I hope you will think of people you are grateful to have had in your life.

You can consider how you might express that gratitude by donating to or volunteering for an organization whose mission aligns with what your dear one cares about. If your dear one loves cats, the [Cat Connection](#) is one of our Jones Partnership grantees. If they love cooking and feeding folks, you can donate money, food or time to help [Chaplains on the Way](#) run their Morning Program this winter. I hope you can find the time to think about your loved ones and honor them this way.

- Elisse Ghitelman, Outreach Commissioner

Holiday Concert!

On Saturday December 16th, singers/songwriters and instrumentalists Harvey Reid and Joyce Andersen return for their 6th Holiday concert here at First Parish at 7 PM.. Advance tickets may be purchased online through the church's website or by seeing Barry Stearns.

Coffee Hour Schedule

We all love great conversation and special snacks at Coffee Hour - let's share the load!

We are dividing up the weeks by last name. When it's your turn to bring a snack for coffee hour, please bring it either in a container it can be served from, or on your own dish, which you bring home and clean yourself.

No nuts please, to help those with allergies.

Here is the Coffee Hour Schedule:

A - E first Sunday



F - L second Sunday
M - S third Sunday
T - Z fourth Sunday

Special arrangements will be made for fifth Sundays.

Thank you for all you do to make Coffee Hour delicious and easy! It takes a village.

Quick, Easy and Important: The Care Crew Needs YOU!

Do you like people? Are you able to lend a hand occasionally to offer a ride to someone, or make them a casserole or soup? If so, you could be part of our Care Crew. This is a low stress, high satisfaction way to support the First Parish community. Are you willing to help?

Please contact **Rev. Megan Lynes** or Plum Kennard (Chair of Lay Pastoral) if you're interested.

Light the Steeple

Honor
a person, occasion,
event, or idea

Contact the Office

✉ office@walthamuu.org

☎ 781.893.6240



When's Your Birthday?

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The Membership Committee is helping us celebrate birthdays as a congregation! Let us know your birthday so we can all honor you!

Email the dates to Gary Morrison.
membership.commissioner@walthamuu.org

Happy Birthday this Month to:

Michael Carmody 11/4
Deb Weiner 11/9
Andy Lowe 11/16
Carla Hillyard 11/16
Kris DiNardo 11/18
Mary Ahrens 11/23
Plum Kennard 11/27
Ashley Kamal 11/30

Please feel free to send a card or an email to these good people!

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



A Welcoming
Unitarian Universalist Congregation

<http://tiny.cc/Donate2FPW>



Ministry Staff Team

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Deb Jose

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Our Mission Statement

The mission of First Parish in Waltham is to be a caring, inclusive, spiritual community committed to using free inquiry and the power of love to achieve peace, justice, and a sustainable world.

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

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