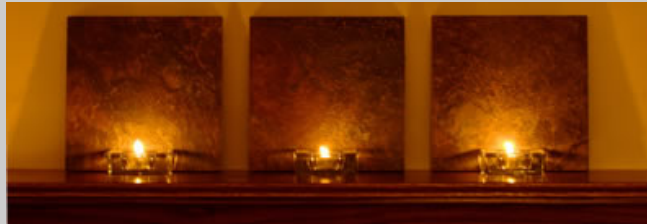


**No matter who you are or  
where you are on life's journey,  
you are welcome here.**



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



### **Upcoming Services This Season**

#### **When the Holidays Hurt - A "Blue Christmas" Gathering for All Dec 14th - 9:15 AM in the Sanctuary**

Despite the bright lights and the cheerful (if relentless) music, some of us end up feeling a little bit blue - or even a lot blue - during the winter holidays. This part of the year is dark and for those who carry hurt or pain in their hearts or minds, it can be a real challenge. The First Parish and Chaplains on the Way communities invite you to join us in a loving and meditative gathering at First Parish on Thursday, December 14, at 9:15 AM.

Let us come together and light candles to lift one another in care and support. Co-officiated by Deb Weiner and Chaplains on the Way community members, we will gather in the sanctuary for this service. You can expect a space of respect and kindness, words of support, music that touches the soul, and space to be present and real.

#### **"No Rehearsal Christmas Pageant" Dec 17th - 10:30 AM**

This all-ages service, led by the First Parish Staff and lay leaders, will offer some good old time fun. Well organized ahead, but no stress in the moment - we'll tell the Christmas story together! Our choir will sing, we'll have special guest violinists, and perhaps some extra surprise costumes will show up too! Our third Advent candle will be lit for Joy, and there will be opportunities for participation by anyone who'd like to take part. (And no pressure if you'd rather simply watch.) Gingerbread house decorating and a festive Coffee Hour will follow the service in Whitcomb Hall. Don't miss out on the fun!

#### **"The Longest Night: A Solstice Service" Dec 21st - 7 PM**

A longstanding tradition at First Parish in Waltham, led by members of the Worship Committee, our annual earth-based celebration of the cusp of the



seasons honors the longest night of the year. This Service will be filled with ritual, drumming, readings, poetry and companionship, followed by festive food and drinks.

**"Christmas Eve by Candlelight"  
Dec 24th - 7:00 PM**

Join us on Christmas Eve for a service of lessons and carols, with a homily by Rev. Megan Lynes, geared for people of all ages. We will light our Advent Candle of Peace, and sing "Silent Night" together in the quiet candle-lit sanctuary. Our offering for this service will support the Minister's Discretionary Fund, which allows the congregation to provide aid and support to those in our community most in need. Join us for a night of mystery and wonder. (Please note: there will be no December 24 AM service).



**Minister's Musings:  
Reflections from Rev. Megan Lynes**

Dear Ones,

This Sunday we will light our third candle for Advent in honor of Joy. And joy it will be, with the holy chaos of an all ages pageant! Our choir will sing, we'll enjoy carols, and we'll decorate gingerbread houses in Coffee Hour. What could be better?

The word Advent comes from the Latin word *Adventus*, meaning arrival. In the Christian tradition, Advent marks a time of waiting and expectation for the celebration of the day Jesus was born. In that same spirit, for those of us who may celebrate the message of Christmas more symbolically, Advent reminds us of our own longing and waiting for something good that is to come. The candles we light on the wreath each Sunday represent *hope, love, joy and peace*. I personally cannot wait for the joy this pageant. The wonder of the littlest angels, the grown man in a donkey costume grinning ... *sheepishly*, the hilarity of the extra surprise animals. But, in addition to the joy, what our hearts long for most is peace in our troubled world.

As the Somali-Kenyan-British poet Warsan Shire says,

*"I held an atlas in my lap  
ran my fingers across  
the whole world  
and whispered where does it hurt?"*

*It answered*

*everywhere  
everywhere  
everywhere"*

As we wait and long for things to be different in our broken world, we must also sharpen our hopes and decide to act in service of our vision. The essence of both Hanukkah and Christmas is the illumination of love and justice. We are a part of that light.

During Advent, we take time to notice what brings light to the world, to reach for one another, and refresh our hopes. When it comes time to give of ourselves to others this year, may our gifts be made of courage and truth. We are a community that believes we can make a difference in our world, by doing the next right thing.

*Lead us then, O Love,  
into lives of deeper compassion.  
Fill our hearts with a thirst for justice,  
A hunger for righteousness,  
and help us be the ones whose deeds create peace.*

May the light of the season guide us all,

*Rev. Megan*

**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.

Between Sept and December, we've been able to help a number of people put food on the table, pay for rent, buy a meal, 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. Just this week (Dec 12th) we paid an electric bill for a very cold household. 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.

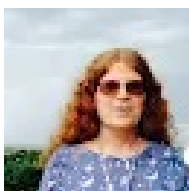
**Your generosity sustains this fund.** It is replenished only when people donate to it directly, (not by an annual pledge for example). We will invite an offering for this purpose on Christmas Eve, but checks can be made at any time. If you wish to contribute please send a check to First Parish in Waltham, 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.

### Next week is the last newsletter of the year...

Due to holiday schedules, we will be producing a newsletter next week, Dec 20th, but will skip the week of Dec 27th. The next newsletter will be published Jan 3rd.

If you ever have an item for inclusion in the newsletter, please email it to [office@walthamuu.org](mailto:office@walthamuu.org) by Tuesday at 10 AM for inclusion in that weeks publication. (Early submissions are equally welcome!)



### One Thing You Can Do

Every week, Monday through Friday, from December to March, Chaplains on the Way rents the church's kitchen and Whitcomb Hall to run their Morning Program. Currently, and previously, unhoused people come in for food, warmth, support and community. I volunteer Monday and Friday mornings (7 AM - 11 AM). If you have time or resources, you could stop by to see the program in action and perhaps bring some food: a dozen eggs, a bunch of bananas, or some orange juice are always appreciated. If I'm there, I'd be happy to introduce you to some of my friends.

- Elisse Ghitelman, Outreach Commissioner

### Update on The Wish Tree...

The Wish Tree in our Parlor looks beautiful and has tripled in size! What's more, presents are coming in! Stop by to pick up a paper mitten which lists something that you might purchase as a gift, and return it by Dec 17th. Your gift will go directly to someone in need at the Waltham Community Day Center. Gifts should be brought back unwrapped and left in the Parlor, with the mitten label attached to the top. Thank you for helping us give the gifts that people need this year!



### Wanted: Photographer for our No-Rehearsal Christmas Pageant on Dec 17th

If wearing a costume and posing in front of the congregation is not your idea of fun, but you would still like to play a vital role, please consider being our photographer for the service. We have a digital camera you can borrow, and would love to be able to make a record of the fun we will have during our re-telling of the Christmas story. Please contact Rev. Megan to volunteer your talents!





## First Parish Holiday Marketplace continues!

Are you looking for an easy way to shop for holiday gift items, decorations for your home, or baked goods or other food items for your holiday meals? Check out the First Parish Holiday Marketplace this Sunday the 10th and the 17th!

Most items will be on sale during coffee hour in Whitcomb Hall but others may be purchased for later delivery. Items may be added each week so check back frequently!

**HATS and SOAPS \* TOYS \* HOLIDAY DECORATIONS \*  
GIFT CARDS\*BAKED GOODS, CHOCOLATES, HOT FUDGE SAUCE and more!**

## Annual Holiday Concert! Saturday, Dec 16th at 7 PM

We hope you'll join us in the sanctuary for a holiday tradition that fills our sanctuary with sound and cheer. Singers/songwriters and instrumentalists Harvey Reid and Joyce Andersen return for their 6th Holiday concert. Advance tickets may be purchased for a discounted price of \$15 [here](#), or by contacting Barry Stearns.

Their razor-sharp harmony vocals will intertwine with Reid's acoustic and slide guitars, mandolins, banjo, and autoharp along with Andersen's violin and viola on a program of traditional and new holiday music.



Tickets on the door will be \$20 each. Don't miss the fabulous concert!

## Book Group: Thursday, December 21 - 1 pm Harrington Room and on Zoom

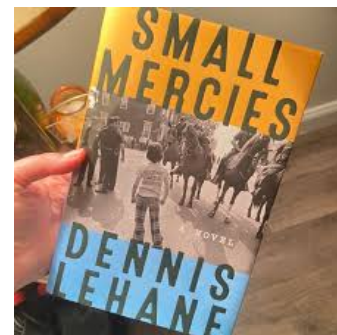
Our next read is *Small Mercies* by Dennis Lehane. Would you like to discuss it together? We'd love to have you join in!

In the summer of 1974 a heatwave blankets Boston and Mary Pat Fennessy is trying to stay one step ahead of the bill collectors. Mary Pat has lived her entire life in the housing projects of "Southie," the Irish American enclave that stubbornly adheres to old tradition and stands proudly apart.


One night Mary Pat's teenage daughter Jules stays out late and doesn't come home. That same evening, a young Black man is found dead, struck by a subway train under mysterious circumstances.

The two events seem unconnected. But Mary Pat, propelled by a desperate search for her missing daughter, begins turning over stones best left untouched—asking questions that bother Marty Butler, chieftain of the Irish mob, and the men who work for him, men who don't take kindly to any threat to their business.

Set against the hot, tumultuous months when the city's desegregation of its public schools exploded in violence, *Small Mercies* is a superb thriller, a brutal depiction of criminality and power, and an unflinching portrait of the dark heart of American racism.







## **Fifth Friday Dinner: Friday, December 29, 2023 at 6:30 pm**

In every month that has a Fifth Friday, we meet for a Shabbat potluck dinner. We **include anyone** who wants to come; all, whatever your religious background or lack of it, are welcome.

The potluck supper starts at 6:30 pm in Whitcomb Hall.

Friday is the evening that celebrates Shabbat, the Sabbath, with great food, traditional wine and challah blessings, camaraderie of friends old and new. Please come, bring family members, friends, and something to share either food or beverage.

Let us know if you are coming and what you are able to bring, by emailing Joan Bone at **bonehaus207@yahoo.com**. Joan keeps the list and can answer questions you might have.

Whether you've come before and are a 'regular' or it's your first time attending, you are welcome. Happy to see you!!!

- Karen Klein & Joan Bone

### **Pastoral Care in Our Congregation - We're here for you!**

Are you struggling with issues that could use the support of another member of our congregation as a listening ear or to offer support? In addition to Rev. Megan Lynes and Deb Weiner, who provide pastoral care to our community, our Lay Pastoral Care Team is available to you.

Please reach out to us if you believe we can help: [pastoralcare@walthamuu.org](mailto:pastoralcare@walthamuu.org) - and a member of our team will respond to you in a timely manner!

Our 'point person' each month is as follows:

December: Plum Kennard  
January: Nancy Lawrence  
February: Plum Kennard

- Plum Kennard (Chair,) Andy LeCompte, Nancy Lawrence, and Bill VanderClock

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### **Coffee Hour Schedule**



Thank you to everyone who's brought special snacks to Coffee Hour - let's keep it going!



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 **This Sunday, Dec 17, is your week! - Thanks!**
- T - Z fourth Sunday

Special arrangements will be made for fifth Sundays.

**For Coffee Hour on Dec 17th we are having a festive holiday spread, and we hope all will bring a treat to share. We'll be making gingerbread houses too!**

Thank you for all you do to make our fellowship time delicious and easy! And a special thanks to those elves who wash the dishes, put away tables, and take out the trash. It takes a village, let's all keep up the good collaboration!

### Light the Steeple

Honor  
a person, occasion,  
event, or idea

Contact the Office  
✉ office@walthamuu.org  
☎ 781.893.6240



### When's Your Birthday?

.....

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

Please email the dates to Gary Morrison:  
**membership.commissioner@walthamuu.org**

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



<http://tiny.cc/Donate2FPW>



### Happy Birthday this Month to:

- Ashley Kamal 11/30
- Karen Klein 12/3
- Rose Reiser 12/12
- Nancy Lawrence 12/13
- Joyce Wilbourn 12/17
- Sue Genser 12/22
- Scott Schur 12/31

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

## Ministry Staff Team

**Parish Minister**  
Rev. Megan Lynes  
617.276.7655  
[revmeganlynes@walthamuu.org](mailto:revmeganlynes@walthamuu.org)

**Office Administrator /  
Music and Choir Director**  
Emma Campbell  
781.893.6240  
[office@walthamuu.org](mailto:office@walthamuu.org)

**Transitional Ministry Associate**  
Deborah Weiner  
617.513.6614  
[deb.weiner@walthamuu.org](mailto:deb.weiner@walthamuu.org)

or  
[musicdirector@walthamuu.org](mailto:musicdirector@walthamuu.org)

## Board Members

**President, Board of Managers**

Deb Jose  
[president@walthamuu.org](mailto:president@walthamuu.org)

**Assistant Treasurer**

Dan DeHainaut  
[asst.treasurer@walthamuu.org](mailto:asst.treasurer@walthamuu.org)

**Clerk**

Peter Duane  
[clerk@walthamuu.org](mailto:clerk@walthamuu.org)

**Community Outreach  
Commissioner**

Elisse Ghitelman  
[outreach.commissioner@walthamuu.org](mailto:outreach.commissioner@walthamuu.org)

**Finance**

Donna VanderClock  
[donna.vanderclock@walthamuu.org](mailto:donna.vanderclock@walthamuu.org)

**Membership**

Gary Morrison  
[gary.morrison@walthamuu.org](mailto:gary.morrison@walthamuu.org)

Brenda Asis  
[brenda.asis@walthamuu.org](mailto:brenda.asis@walthamuu.org)

**Music and Worship Commissioner**

Bethany Templeton Klem  
[bethany.klem@walthamuu.org](mailto:bethany.klem@walthamuu.org)

**Property**

Dan Taylor  
[property@walthamuu.org](mailto:property@walthamuu.org)

**Religious Education Commissioner**

Pam Penton  
[pam.penton@walthamuu.org](mailto:pam.penton@walthamuu.org)

**Treasurer**

Janet Riley  
[treasurer@walthamuu.org](mailto:treasurer@walthamuu.org)

## 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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