

**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

"The Longest Night: A Solstice Service"
Dec 21st - 7:00 PM
In the Chapel and on Zoom

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, poetry and companionship, followed by festive food and drinks.

"Christmas Eve by Candlelight"
Dec 24th - 7:00 PM
In the Sanctuary and on Zoom

Join us on Christmas Eve for a service of lessons and carols, with readings and poetry shared by parishioners and a homily by Rev. Megan Lynes. We will light our Advent Candle of Peace, and sing "Silent Night" together in the darkened sanctuary, candles in hand. 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 tradition, mystery and wonder. Enjoy a cup of cocoa or chai to warm you on your way out into the night.

(Please note: there is no morning service on December 24th.)

"Rising Green: A Service to Welcome the New Year "
Dec 31st - 10:30 AM
Led by Deborah Weiner

**With music by Michael Carmody
In the Chapel and on Zoom**

Illustrations of the wheel of the year show an old man edging toward his final days (the dying of the year), holding his hand out to a newborn baby, springing forth with the new year's sun. On this final day of the old year, we'll gather to recognize that which we want to let go of, and that which we want to embrace in the coming year. There will be meditation, music, the warmth of friendship, and the promise of a year "rising green to bring a new day." Come and join us for a time of ritual and remembrance.



**"For This Time" - Thoughts from Deborah Weiner
Transitional Ministry Associate**

Holidays - the Yin and the Yang


I'm writing this on Tuesday morning, the day after the second big rain and wind storm in two weeks. The first one didn't amount to much around these parts; this last one, however, was something else - 70 mph wind gusts, torrential rain, flooding, power outages, and more. At my house a falling birch tree 1-½ doors down took out all the power lines for most of my street...Eversource has not even estimated when the power will be back. And at church yesterday part of a tree limb fell and whacked my car hood, giving it a good dent. The internet connection at the church was up and down, the fire board went off (no fire, just technical gremlins) and...it was a day.

And of course, it's now less than a week before Christmas. The tree at our house is half decorated, I haven't started wrapping stuff (and won't be doing that in the dark), and all in all, you might surmise that I'm feeling a bit...stressed. So as I write this - sitting in another warm church with power and internet and heat - I'm aware of the yin and the yang of this time. I think we all have to realize that global warming - which I refer to as global weirding - is going to cause more storms like the most recent one. We have to not only be ready for this kind of stuff, but recognize our own part in what's going on. And...while I could easily decide to flip out a bit about the unwrapped gifts and the food I'll likely have to throw out from the fridge, I know darn well that these are First World problems.

I, after all, have a house and a car. I have friends who are offering to house my husband and me and let us take a hot shower. And I'm pretty confident that - as inconvenient as all this is - it's going to pass in a few days, and things will return to 'normal' as we have known it. Not so for all of us, and not to be taken for granted.

At times like this, and at this time of the year, I like to read an old piece by Rev. Clarke Dewey Wells called, "You Be Glad at That Star!" It's not only charming, but a reminder about the simple things in nature that are emblematic of what *really* is important.

He wrote: "Several years ago and shortly after twilight our 3 1/2 year old tried to gain his parents' attention to a shining star. The parents were busy with time and schedules, the irritabilities of the day and other worthy pre-occupations. 'Yes, yes, we see the star - now I'm busy, don't bother me.' On hearing this the young one launched through the porch door, fixed us with a fiery gaze and said, 'You be glad at that star!' I will not forget the incident or his perfect words. It was one of those rare moments when you get everything you need for the good of your soul - reprimand, disclosure and blessing. It was especially good for me, that surprising moment, because I am one who responds automatically and negatively to the usual exhortations to 'pause-and-be-more-appreciative-of-life.' Fortunately, I was caught grandly off guard."



I am grateful for the reminders in this story. Things happen - to all of us. And hopefully, they resolve...and with the resolution often comes appreciation of that which is most important in our lives, at this time of year and all the year. Despite the bumps and turns in the road, I hope that you, too, will find time to stop, to gaze up in the clear night sky or listen to music that lifts you, and celebrate those tiny moments. And be *glad* at that star.

In faith, with love,

Deb

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 the wider Waltham community in times of need.

Between September and December, we've been able to help many 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 a month without work. This past week we paid someone's heating bill because they had no way to do it. This is a life affirming, giving ministry that demonstrates First Parish lives its mission of creating justice in the world.

On Christmas Eve our entire offering will be allocated to this fund.

This is the place to donate so that we can "give it all away" to people who need it the most.

If you wish to contribute, please send a check payable to "First Parish in Waltham" with "Minister's Discretionary Fund" in the memo line. Or alternatively, 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.

This is the last newsletter of the year...

Due to holiday schedules, this is the last newsletter of the year. 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 by Tuesday at 10 AM for inclusion in that week's publication. (Early submissions are equally welcome!)

Save the date:

Sunday, January 21, 2024

A Transitions Workshop Focusing on Healthy Communication and Resolving Conflict!

Join us for an exciting, post-worship event on January 21 to help strengthen our First Parish in Waltham community. The event will take place in Whitcomb Hall from 12-3 PM, and lunch will be served. Stay tuned for more details!

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

Coming in the New Year "An Evening of Music and Fun" - Saturday, January 27th at 6:30 PM

As part of our effort to reach out to the community, First Parish will hold an all-ages community open mic night in Whitcomb Hall on January 27th. Brenda Asis will host. We'll offer refreshments for sale and have information about First Parish available at each table.

Admission price: suggested donation of \$10. To register for a performance spot, email [Brenda Asis](mailto:Brenda.Asis). For more information, visit our web page: [An Evening of Music & Fun!](#)

For other volunteer opportunities (making refreshments, greeting table, setup etc.), please email [Joan Smith](mailto:Joan.Smith). We can't wait!!

Adopt a Poinsettia - they need a new home!

Our Poinsettias have been lovely in our sanctuary all season long...but as our Christmas and Solstice celebrations end, they need a new home. Do you know a First Parishioner who would be cheered by having one? Please take one following the Christmas Eve service and deliver it to someone who needs some Christmas cheer! (Leave the white ones please, for a little more time in



Waltham UU Webpage Waltham UU Facebook page

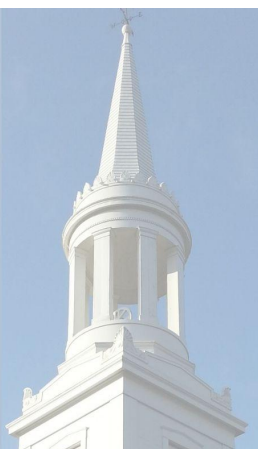
Holding your phone's camera over the QR codes above will take you to either the First Parish in Waltham webpage or our Facebook page where we hope that you will "like" and follow us! These are great ways to stay connected!

All of us at First Parish in Waltham wish you and yours the best of this seasons joy, and a Healthy and Happy New Year!

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!

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

**Happy Birthday
this Month to:**

- 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!

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



A Welcoming
Unitarian Universalist Congregation

<http://tiny.cc/Donate2FPW>



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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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