

**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:

**January 7 - 10:30 AM
"The Singing Bus Driver"**

Rev. Megan Lynes preaching

This Sunday is celebrated in many churches as Epiphany, the arrival of the Three Kings or Magi. Like the Wise Ones from afar, we too carry gifts, and we celebrate with all those who have the courage to take a different path in service of what's true and good. Epiphany reminds us not to hold back the best we have to offer, no matter how humble. With help from the poet Mary Oliver, we will explore our gifts, whether inherent or cultivated. At this turning of the year, what great gifts are in your hands?

**January 14 - 10:30 AM
"With Good Will for All"**

Deborah Weiner preaching

Martin Luther King Jr's embrace of non-violence was shaped by his connection to six principles which he drew from the teachings of Gandhi, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Bayard Rustin, and others. Key among them was his affinity with the word *agape*, which called on those resisting violence (or wishing to promote such action) to hold to a belief in 'redeeming good will toward all.' In these days when lines of conflict seem drawn not in sand, but in concrete, we'll examine more closely the enduring message of King's embrace of *agape* and the ways in which we at First Parish in Waltham can help make those beliefs a reality.

Minister's Musings:



Reflections from Rev. Megan Lynes

Happy New Year and Welcome 2024!

Each in our own way we reflect on all that happened in the last year, sorting through events and interactions, taking stock of what we've learned, and organizing our thoughts to help us begin our new year.

About five years ago, a fire swept through my local community, and a few days afterward I spent time with a couple who had just lost everything they owned: old family photos, the wife's nearly finished dissertation stored on her computer, and most terribly - their dog. Even though they were able to move in with a relative, their eyes held the glassy look of helplessness and shock. In a matter of hours, their world had been forever altered, and I could only imagine how impossible their future must feel.

Yet the strangest thing happened - when I asked them how it was for them to have lost everything, they spoke haltingly of gratitude. They felt they'd narrowly escaped death and that ultimately having one another is what really counts. They said that since they simply couldn't go back to anything from the past, this was a clean break toward making the lives they truly wanted. They knew that each day would be a struggle for a long while to come, but they also felt liberated to begin anew. They had an outlook for the year ahead that was far more focused on gratitude and creative energy than any new year's resolutions I have ever made.

In the past year some of us faced disasters, large or small, while others have navigated through, relatively unscathed. Reflecting back on 2023, let's appreciate those who supported us in tough times. Within First Parish, I've witnessed many of you stepping forward with quiet acts of kindness, shaping the community further into a place of solace and strength. Compassion and gratitude expressed, multiplies.

I've heard that only one in ten people keep the new year's resolutions they make. I guess they had the choice to go back to their old place. I don't think they're to blame; old places are familiar, they're what we know. But after meeting this couple I got to thinking about how a resolution could be a "mindset" rather than an activity. Cultivating gratitude doesn't seem impossible when every day offers air to breathe, a stranger to smile at, and a congregation with a mindset of "home for all."

Welcome 2024! Here we come!

Rev. Megan



With Gratitude, from Deb

Dear Ones,

I want to thank you for your concern and care for me on Sunday when I offered a rather dramatic end to our Sunday worship service. I am grateful to all who responded to my fainting episode, and am glad to say that, with the addition of fluids and rest, I'm feeling just fine now. What a great congregation you are - full of people who know what it means to 'minister to one another.' I appreciate you and wish you a happy AND healthy new year!

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



January 6th is my sister's birthday - she was due to arrive on my birthday (the 8th) but ended up starting the trend of upstaging me instead. According to the Christian calendar, January 6th is also Epiphany - a celebration marking the first appearance of Jesus as a Divine being.

However this is a word with a double meaning. Often, when people use the term 'epiphany' they are referring to a sudden revelation, realization or insight. Using this definition, I chose the music for the service on January 7th.

The Prelude features a piece by Beethoven. I realized during middle school that I was a nerd when we were asked to complete a music project on someone we thought had made a large impact on the development of modern music. All the other girls in my class (except one) produced a project on Madonna. Mine was on Beethoven - and the contributions he had made to the development of writing music for piano. In case you are wondering, I am proud of being a nerd!

Anton Arensky composed the piece I have chosen for the Offertory. My first experience with this composition was at the end of a piano recital - and it was the first time a piece of solo piano music moved me to tears when listening to it. It may not 'speak' to you in the same way, but this piece has been with me for decades and is proof of 'love at first hearing.' Other pieces sometimes need familiarization before I 'fall in love' - for me, music by Bach is a good example of this.

We frequently think of blue skies as being the ideal weather condition. When using a sentence with the phrase 'a cloud on the horizon' we imagine the cloud in question to be a negative occurrence. Books published by "The Cloud Appreciation Society" led me to change my thinking and realize that clouds can have different meanings for other people. For example, if you were desperate for rain, a cloud on the horizon could be an extremely positive thing. Holding this thought, our service will close with 'Clouds' by Tōru Takemitsu. And if there are any clouds on your horizon for 2024, I hope they have silver linings!

Yours musically,
Emma



Important Snowstorm Procedures on Sundays! Let it Snow (Well, it's Winter After All)

In case of a major snowstorm which occurs on or leading up to Sunday, we will follow these procedures:

1. A determination on cancelling Sunday worship services will be made by the worship leader (or, in the case of a pulpit guest, the staff worship coordinator) in consultation with the congregation president, by 7:30 AM on Sunday.
2. Upon consultation with other worship staff, the service may be moved to zoom-only (originating from the homes of worship leaders).
3. If worship is cancelled or if it will be held on zoom, a message will be sent to all on the church mailing list, so indicating, no later than 8:30 AM.
4. If worship is cancelled or will be held on zoom, an update to the church's website, giving information and (if relevant) a zoom link, will be made by 9 AM.

5. In the case of a cancellation of worship, all afternoon and evening activities at the church that are sponsored by the church, will also be cancelled (and may be rescheduled).



Words of gratitude from the Finance Committee

Many thanks to all of you who donated and purchased items for the Holiday Marketplace! Thanks to your generosity, we made just under **\$2,000** for the benefit of First Parish.

-Donna Vanderclock

Minister's Discretionary Fund - A Big Thank You!

Throughout December and on Christmas Eve funds were collected to support the Minister's Discretionary Fund. This fund is used to support those in need in our congregation and in our wider community. On Christmas Eve there was such an outpouring of love: \$1,656.75 was collected! That, in addition to other donations we've received over the last month, brings our donation totals for December to more than \$2500.00. Thank you all so very much for helping us live our vision of a caring and compassionate community that centers love and justice.

Rev. Megan Lynes and Deborah Weiner

Save the date: Sunday, January 21, 2024 - 12-3 PM

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, and lunch will be served. Stay tuned for more details!

Game Night!

Friday January 12th, 2024 6:00pm

Let's liven things up with spicy
Asian cuisine!

Kimchi, Satay, Dim sum, Fried Rice, Onigiri, Curry,
Drunken Noodles, Miso Soup, Biryani. Yum!

It's a casual, family-friendly potluck meal
We'd love your company even if you just want to eat & chat
Bring your favorite games or play with ones at FP
At the end of the evening, we clean up together

Come at any time, for any part of the evening. Need a ride?
We may be able to help. Special diet? It's best to bring your own food.
Need info? Contact Martha Gallagher!



Sunday, January 14th @ 12:30

In the Chapel



Join us for a film screening and discussion event in the Chapel at First Parish located at 50 Church Street, Waltham, MA, 02452.

Based on the book by Dr. Ibram X. Kendi, this documentary film directed by Roger Ross Williams will provide an eye-opening view into the history of racism, the origins of racist ideas, and the impact of both on society. This in-person community event promises to be thought-provoking and educational. Come for the movie, discussion, or both.

Light refreshments served at 12:15.



RSVP:

Join the Adult Religious Education Committee, Social Action Team, and 8th Principle Team at First Parish in Waltham, to observe and share thoughts on these important concepts.

**First Parish Book Club, Harrington Room (hybrid)
January 18, 2024 at 1:00 pm**

"The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store" by James McBride

In 1972, when workers in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, were digging the foundations for a new development, the last thing they expected to find was a skeleton at the bottom of a well. Who the skeleton was and how it got there were two of the long-held secrets kept by the residents of Chicken Hill, the dilapidated neighborhood where immigrant Jews and African Americans lived side by side and shared ambitions and sorrows. Chicken Hill was where Moshe and Chona Ludlow lived when Moshe integrated his theater and where Chona ran the Heaven & Earth Grocery Store. When the state came looking for a deaf boy to institutionalize him, it was Chona and Nate Timblin, the Black janitor at Moshe's theater and the unofficial leader of the Black community on Chicken Hill, who worked together to keep the boy safe.

As these characters' stories overlap and deepen, it becomes clear how much the people who live on the margins of white, Christian America struggle and what they must do to survive. When the truth is finally revealed about what happened on Chicken Hill and the part the town's white establishment played in it, McBride shows us that even in dark times, it is love and community—heaven and earth—that sustain us.

Bringing his masterly storytelling skills and his deep faith in humanity to *The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store*, James McBride has written a novel as compassionate as *Deacon King Kong* and as inventive as *The Good Lord Bird*.

First Parish in Waltham
A Welcoming Unitarian Universalist Congregation

presents



An Evening of Music & Fun!

Community Open Mic



Calling all musicians, singers, and enthusiastic listeners!

Join us for a public, multi-generational, Open Mic Night to foster creativity, build community and have fun!

All ages and skill levels welcome

Saturday, January 27, 2024 6:30pm - 9:30pm

\$10 Suggested Donation

First Parish in Waltham, 50 Church Street, Waltham, MA

Space is limited for performance spots. If you wish to perform, please register by sending an email to Brenda.Asis@WalthamUU.org

Calling all musicians, singers, and enthusiastic listeners!

An evening of music and fun – join us for a public, multigenerational, Open Mic event to foster creativity, build community and have fun! All ages and skill levels are welcome.

Space is limited for performance spots. If you wish to perform, please register by sending an email to Brenda.Asis@WalthamUU.org

Kindly include your name, number of performers, type of performance and one or two sentences to introduce your group. Each performer/group will have up to 5 minutes to perform one act. There may be an option to perform a second number, depending upon the number of performers.



Waltham UU Facebook Page



Waltham UU Webpage

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!

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:

Sarah Remage-Healy 1/2
Emma Campbell 1/8
Scott Tougas 1/12
Ethan Anderson 1/17

*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!



<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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