

**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:

Feb 4 - 10:30 AM

"Ain't I A Woman?"

Deborah Weiner preaching

Black History Month - with Women's History Month coming in March - offers us inspiration to reflect on several courageous women who have turned the tide, changed history, and helped shape our thinking and our lives.

Feb 11 - 10:30 AM

"All Things Wise and Wonderful"

Rev. Megan Lynes preaching

**** ONLINE service only! ****

Imbolc, a Celtic festival in early February, signifies the shift from winter to spring, coinciding with the lambing season. This sermon centers on the stories and lessons of James Herriot, the celebrated British veterinarian. Drawing inspiration from his work among farmers in the Yorkshire Dales, we will explore themes of resilience, humor and hope.

**** Due to the RACE Cancer Foundation road race that will shut down roads all around First Parish during our usual worship time, our service will be online only. ****

Feb 18 - 10:30 AM

"The Stories We Tell: Living the Beloved Community"

Rev. Christana Wille McKnight preaching

The Beloved Community is a dream that the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King made famous, but it is also an inspiration to who we can become - individually and together. This Sunday we will be reflecting on how the stories we tell shape our understandings of where we have come from, and how we can bring our values more fully into the communities we are building for the future. (Rev. Christana Wille McKnight is the Island Minister and Beloved Community Project Manager at Star Island, a UU/UCC Conference Center off the coast of New Hampshire.)

Feb 25 - 10:30 AM

Regie O'Hare Gibson preaching

Poet, Performance Artist and Playwright Regie O'Hare Gibson, a frequent pulpit guest, will lead our worship service as we close out February.



A Message from the Parish Minister: Rev. Megan Lynes

On Sunday, as bagpipes filled the air with sound and power, the kids of the congregation gathered in the back of the sanctuary. They were hard at work "inventing things." On the way downstairs to Sunday School, one of them handed me a drawing of "a machine that makes paper without cutting down any trees." As the lay led service continued beautifully upstairs, the kids settled into their lesson. One young person told the group that Nikola Tesla had designed an electric car over a century ago, but that the fossil fuel industry promoted cars that used gasoline instead and the first electric cars never took off. "Someone wanted money more than they cared about the earth," someone else concluded. A more true statement could not have been made. It gave me such hope that this is what our young people are talking about in Sunday School.

Unitarian Universalists believe that personal experience, conscience, and reason should be the final authorities in religion. There is no creed with which you must agree. Religious insight may come from a book, a person, or an institution, but religious authority does not. Religious authority comes from within ourselves. It comes from conversations among peers in basement classrooms. Religious insights are tested in our individual hearts and minds, and lived out in the choices we make every day. Ours is a free faith. But we live it best in community, when we challenge one another to think and rethink, to share our convictions and to work for a better world. Ethical living is the supreme witness of religion.

I tell you of the children because Sunday was a day of creativity all over the church, both upstairs and down. A big thank you to the faithful parishoners who led our worship service, for reminding us that its good to think for ourselves. And thank you to the teen leaders, Vivian and Zee, who led our younger kids in speaking their minds. As educator Paulo Freire put it: "If the structure does not permit dialogue the structure must be changed." Luckily, here at First Parish, we are doing just fine.

With gratitude and love,
Rev. Megan





From the Finance Committee:
Open Mic Thanks

Our first Community Open Mic event was a great success, with about 80 people attending and many talented performers from both the congregation and the community. Not only that but we raised just over \$600 for the benefit of First Parish.



Special thanks to Joan Smith and Brenda Asis who organized the whole thing and to all the others who provided technical support, cookies, setup, cleanup, and parking lot assistance! We hope to do it again.

Donna VanderClock
Finance Commissioner

THE 2ND ANNUAL
VALENTINE
POP-UP SHOP
WHITCOMB HALL 11:45am
ONE DAY ONLY
FEBRUARY 4TH
CARDS, MAPLE PECANS and
OTHER DELIGHTS

A FUNDRAISER FOR FIRST PARISH
VENMO, CASH, CHECKS

Secret Valentine Exchange!

From Pam Penton, Religious Education Commissioner:



At our service on January 28 everyone was invited to take a red heart and write their own name on it. During the Time For All Ages, we placed that heart in the baskets that the UU Explorers brought around. At the end of the service, we chose a new heart as our Secret Valentine, and made some art for them in Coffee Hour.

If you missed the service but want to participate, it's not too late! Just send me an email at pjpenton@gmail.com and I will match you with a Secret Valentine.

The next step? Over the next two weeks you can make one or two cards or notes (materials available at Welcome Table or use your own) and return it at another time on the Welcome Table or find another way to deliver a warm greeting to your Secret Valentine. On February 19 please reveal yourself and get to know your secret valentine a little better. People of all ages are encouraged to participate!!



One Thing You Can Do

The film, [We Are All Plastic People Now](#), addresses the deep environmental and health consequences of the prevalence of plastic in our environment. It is available to stream for free from PBS. One group that is working to push governments to deal with these issues is [Beyond Plastics](#). There is a Greater Boston chapter of Beyond Plastics, organized by Watertown UU, Eileen Ryan.

- Elisse Ghitelman, Outreach Commissioner

Game Night!

Friday February 9th, 2024 6:00pm

Italian cuisine is our inspiration!

Risotto, Pesto, Seafood, Beautiful Salads, Polenta,
Lasagna, Arancini (rice balls, mmm), Tortellini,
Gelato, Cannoli, Espresso

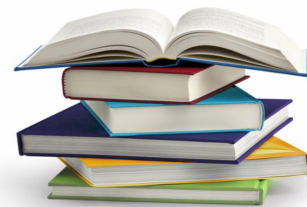
It's a casual, family-friendly potluck meal
We'd love your company even if you just want to eat & chat
Bring your favorite games or play with ones at FP
At the end of the evening, we clean up together

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!



First Parish Book Club
February 15, 2024
1:00 PM in the Harrington Room and over
Zoom - All Welcome!

A Woman is No Man
Etaf Rum
Published 2019



Three generations of Palestinian-American women living in Brooklyn are torn between individual desire and the strict mores of Arab culture in this powerful debut - a heart-wrenching story of love, intrigue, courage, and betrayal that will resonate with women from all backgrounds, giving voice to the silenced and agency to the oppressed.

"Where I come from, we've learned to silence ourselves. We've been taught that silence will save us. Where I come from, we keep these stories to ourselves. To tell them to the outside world is unheard of - dangerous, the ultimate shame."

Palestine, 1990. Seventeen-year-old Isra prefers reading books to entertaining the suitors her father has chosen for her. Over the course of a week, the naïve and dreamy girl finds herself quickly betrothed and married and is soon living in Brooklyn. There, Isra struggles to adapt to the expectations of her oppressive mother-in-law, Fareeda, and strange new husband, Adam, a pressure that intensifies as she begins to have children - four daughters instead of the sons Fareeda tells Isra she must bear.

Brooklyn, 2008. Eighteen-year-old Deya, Isra's oldest daughter, must meet with potential husbands at her grandmother Fareeda's insistence, though her only

desire is to go to college. Deya can't help but wonder if her options would have been different had her parents survived the car crash that killed them when Deya was only eight. But her grandmother is firm on the matter: The only way to secure a worthy future for Deya is through marriage to the right man.

But fate has a will of its own, and soon, Deya will find herself on an unexpected path that leads her to shocking truths about her family - knowledge that will force her to question everything she thought she knew about her parents, the past, and her own future.

Set in an America at once foreign to many and staggeringly close at hand, *A Woman Is No Man* is a story of culture and honor, secrets and betrayals, love and violence. It is an intimate glimpse into a controlling and closed cultural world and a universal tale about family and the ways silence and shame can destroy those we have sworn to protect.

All are welcome to join us in reading this book, and share in our discussion on Feb 15th!

**An Invitation From Regie O'Hare Gibson
Our Worship and Workshop leader on Sunday
February 25th:**

Dear Friends & Fellow Travelers,

You are invited to the Northeast premiere of *Different Ships, Same Boat* on Monday, **February 26 at 6:00PM** at the Boston Athenaeum in downtown Boston.



Through powerful spoken word, music and song, *Different Ships, Same Boat* invites you into a series of chapters — each curating moving, real-world stories to unpack facets of the ways folks risk, live, love and laugh.

The evening ranges from uplifting and funny to poignant. One of my favorite chapters is about immigration. In it, an Ottoman Jewish couple's US immigration hinges on legal definitions of their race, a story based on actual court documents on which race shifts from "Turk," to "Mexican," "Hebrew" and, finally, "White." Other stories explore tensions between Black and Chinese Americans and recount the poems etched into the walls of the barracks on Angel Island.

I wrote, co-direct and co-host this show with pianist and composer Guy Mendilow. It also features Courtney Swain on voice, bass and piano and Chris Baum on violin. I'd love for you to come experience it yourself!

- Regie Gibson

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

Sometimes the listening ear or kind and confidential support of a fellow parishioner can make all the difference. 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 - and a member of our team will respond to you in a timely manner!

Our 'point person' each month is as follows:
February: Plum Kennard

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

Is anyone available to offer an occasional ride on a Sunday morning to a parishioner living in Cambridge? If so, please contact the office via



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!



Inclement Weather Procedures for Sundays

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

1. A determination on canceling 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 canceled or if it will be held on zoom, a message will be sent to all on the church mailing list, no later than 8:30 AM.
 4. If worship is canceled 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 cancelation of in person worship, all afternoon and evening activities at the church that are sponsored by the church, will also be canceled (and may be rescheduled).
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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

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



A Welcoming
Unitarian Universalist Congregation

<http://tiny.cc/Donate2FPW>



Jane True 2/4
Jim Ohm 2/4
Bethany Klem 2/9
Brian Anderson 2/11
Maeve Strafford 2/18
Leslie Gildersleeve 2/20
Jim Griffith 2/20

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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.

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