

First Parish in Waltham Newsletter

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

This Week at . . .



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Upcoming Sunday Services



Music Sunday: *Transformed by Generosity*

Sunday April 7th at 10:30 AM

It's Music Sunday! Our annual service brings us together with music and singing and a joyful noise that expresses our interdependence and kindred spirit. Our member-led service will be led by our Worship Committee and First Parish Choir. Join us to celebrate the myth, passion and inspiration that the power of music has to shape our lives.

This Sunday April 7th we will "Share the Plate" with The MA Bail Fund.



"Exploring Ramadan"

April 14th, 2024 - 10.30am

Rev. Megan Lynes preaching

Join us to explore Ramadan through the lens of interdependence, reflecting on its themes of humility, gratitude, illumination and community. All are welcome to deepen our understanding and foster interfaith dialogue in a spirit of open-heartedness, learning and connection.

Sunday Services

If you want to join us over Zoom please contact Emma in the office for details.

The Massachusetts Bail Fund believes bailing our neighbors out of jail is a necessary strategy to reduce the harm of incarceration, while we fight alongside other community groups to abolish pre-trial detention and supervision. The people we assist would otherwise sit in jail, for months or even years, for no reason other than their inability to pay bail. These pre-trial sentences have devastating far reaching consequences affecting not just those held in the criminal system, but their families and communities. Pre-trial detention results in people losing jobs, housing, custody of their children, and further destabilization such as loss of regular medical and mental health treatment.



Upcoming Events

Don't miss our Free Concerts!

Saturday, April 6th at 11 am
The Waltham Philharmonic Sextet

Saturday, April 6th at 3:00 pm
Joyful Voices of Inspiration

 Find out more at walthamuu.org



Friday April 12th, 2024 – 6:00pm

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 use ours. At the end of the evening, we clean up together. You're welcome to come at any time.

Need a ride? We may be able to help. Special diet? It's best to bring your own food. Need info? Contact Martha Gallagher!



Your Building Needs You!

We have a beautiful building that needs willing hands to help tend and mend it through the years. And with candidating week coming, it's more important than ever for our building to look it's very spiffiest! Here's where YOU come in: there are two Stewardship Work Days coming up on which you can help out with various tasks in and around the First Parish building.

Please join us on **Saturday morning the 13th of April from 10am - 1pm** (before candidating week) **and/or Sunday May 19th 1pm - 4 pm**. Yummy, nourishing victuals will be available for all workers. It's a great family activity or just come by yourself. Hope to see you there. Contact Dan Taylor (781-927-4408) with questions.



The FPW Annual Retreat at Ferry Beach is just around the corner!
May 31 - June 2

**** Please register ASAP to save your spot and help us plan! ****

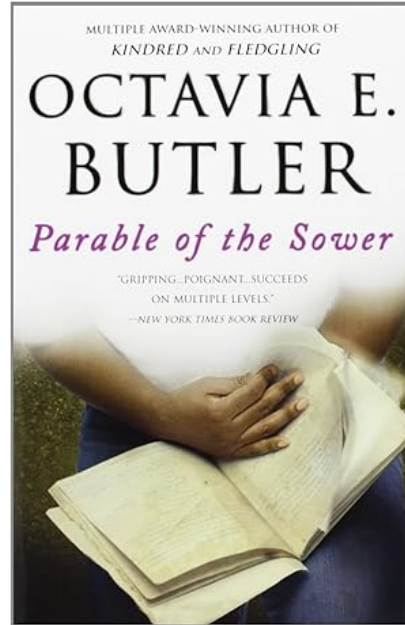
To register, click here:
[Weekend Registration Form.](#)

Ferry Beach is the home of a Universalist (now UU) retreat center in Saco, ME. Come on your own, bring a friend or your whole family, but either way - you belong!

There is a **20% Discount for first-time attendees**. Speak to Rev. Megan if you need a **scholarship** to attend. We do not want money to be a barrier for your participation in this community weekend.

The [Info packet](#) tells you all about the retreat. Contact retreat@walthamuu.org if you have questions. (There is also an option to join us just for Saturday - that form will be available later.)

Thank you! Sue Genzer (organizer)



Two Different Chances to Discuss a Great Book!

"Parable of the Sower"
by Octavia Butler

A thought-provoking dystopian novel that explores themes of resilience, survival, and the power of community.

Parable of the Sower is the story of Lauren Olamina, a young woman who lives in a near-future dystopian California. When her home community succumbs to the destructive forces of the world around it, Lauren is forced onto the road in search of a new life. Throughout her journey, she gradually builds a new belief system, as well as kinship with a new community.

First Parish Book Club

Thursday, April 18
1:00 pm in the Harrington Room and on line

Equity and Justice Book Club

Friday, April 19, 7:00 pm on Zoom only

A Small Group for All!

Led by Rev. Megan Lynes
Harrington Room
Continuing on April 3, 10, 24 and
May 1 and 15

We've had such a great time that we all voted to continuing our group 4 weeks longer. There's room for you too!

Come once or to all, it's been wonderful to dive deeper together in topics prepared ahead by Megan, but generated by our own discussions. The general theme is exploring what it means to live our "one wild and precious life" (Mary Oliver) but each week. If you would like to attend, please

WARRANT

The legal voters of The First Parish, Universalist-Unitarian, Inc. are hereby notified that a Special Meeting of the Corporation will be held in the sanctuary and via Zoom video conferencing on **Sunday, April 7, 2024**, immediately following the worship service.

Article I:

To vote on the recommendations of the Nominating Committee for the delegates to the General Assembly.

Article II:

To vote on the recommendations of the Jones Partnership Committee and the Board of Managers for Jones Partnership Fund grants.

Article III:

To vote on the recommendation of the Board of Managers and the Finance Commission to purchase an AED (Automatic External Defibrillator) for First Parish in Waltham.

Deborah José
President, Board of Managers

Peter Duane
Clerk

Online Auction April 12-21, 2024

Have you submitted something to the auction yet?

Last year 33 friends and members of First Parish donated over 82 individual and group items and services. The offerings ranged from a week at a resort in New Hampshire to tickets for concerts and theater to homemade pies and takeout dinners to North African and French cuisine to gift certificates at local restaurants. There was jewelry, handmade soap, artwork, cocktails to go, games, and a hot tub experience! You are only limited by your imagination!

After we list all the items online we'll share the link so you can bid early and often! Then on April 20th we'll finish up our bidding in person at our Community Entertainment event. (See below.)

Leslie Gildersleeve
(gildersleeveleslie@gmail.com)
and Donna VanderClock
(donnavandercllock@gmail.com) will be happy to receive your donation and include it in the auction. Contact one of them with your item, a short description and a starting bid or flat price.

Thank you for supporting our congregation!

Discussion on Cults: How Can a Spiritual Journey Go Wrong?

Led by Andy LeCompte
Sunday, April 14th 12:30pm
in the Harrington Room.



How can a spiritual journey go wrong? What is, and what is not, a cult? Everyone is welcome to join Andy LeCompte, author of *Finding Miracles: Escape from a Cult*, to discuss these topics. Refreshments will be served. To find out more about the book, go to Andy's website: andrewlecompte.com



WAKE UP THE EARTH Spring Celebration!

Sunday, April 28



1:00-4:00

1:00 Drumming with Africano
2:00 Mia Wenjen, Newton Author of Sumo Joe and Boxer Baby
2:15 Maypole Dancing
2:30 Little Beats Childrens Yoga
3:00 Music by the Jazzabelles



Music, Dancing, Games, Food, Crafts & Celebrations
ALL AGES ARE WELCOME

First Parish of Waltham
50 Church Street
A Unitarian Universalist Church
www.walthamuu.org



Coffee Hour Treats!

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.

A - E first Sunday
F - L second Sunday
M - S third Sunday
T - Z fourth Sunday

Save the Date!

First Parish Online Auction and Community Entertainment Evening

Saturday, April 20, 2024, at 7pm

Your Time to Shine!

Celebrate your unique Talents and Abilities

You are invited to be part of the evening's entertainment! Anything goes: juggle, recite a poem, dance, sing, play music, tell a joke, do magic, teach how to mix a cocktail - you name it, we want to see it!

[Use this form to sign up.](#) Questions? Contact Scott Tougas or Brenda Asis.

Messages from Our Community

Ministerial Search

We are incredibly grateful to our Search Committee - they have worked long hours and battled many obstacles to get us to the point where **we are able to confirm that we have a Ministerial Candidate who will be with us from April 28 - May 5th.** You may have many questions and the Search Committee have come up with answers that you can find on our website [here](#). More information will be shared when we are able to do so - keep your eyes peeled for emails and news updates!

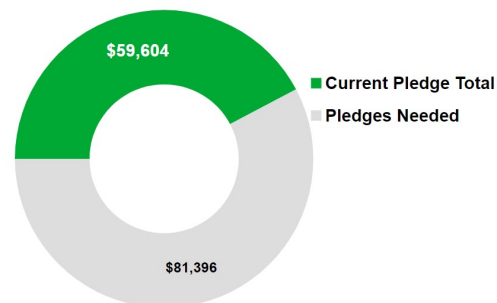
Pledge Drive Update

Good news! As of Monday, April 1, we have reached 42% of our pledge goal with 17 pledges received. **Please help us complete the circle! Return your pledge form as soon as possible so we can finish planning for what we can afford in the next church year.**

If you have questions, please contact Donna VanderClock (donna.vanderclock@walthamuu.org) or Dan DeHainaut (dan.dehainaut@walthamuu.org).

Click [here](#) and fill out a form if you have not yet pledged. No printing, envelope or stamp are necessary!

First Parish Stewardship 2025
Pledge Goal \$141,000



For This Time Thoughts from Deborah Weiner - Transitional Ministry Associate "Where Real Salvation Lies"

I hope that you had a good Easter holiday - in whatever way you do or don't celebrate it.

When I was a kid, there were visits to department store Easter Bunnies and a basket of goodies, along with dinner with our family or friends. And as I nurtured my own family, we colored eggs - sometimes with psychedelic results - and had great egg hunts in the yard (if the weather was good enough) or around the house. It was tons of fun.

Church on Easter Sunday, for this lifelong UU of Jewish origin, was an 'interesting' experience. In the church of my childhood and youth (the Unitarian Society of New Haven) the minister 'got around' the conundrum of Easter by arranging for the choir to do Music Sunday that week. For a congregation that

had a lot of Yale professors, humanists, Jews, atheists, agnostics, and refugees from Christianity, it seemed a good way out. Later, as I started preaching on Easter Sundays, I realized firsthand that it was a tough holiday to wrap my head around. I am far from a Christian, and I have readily admitted that Easter is "not my holiday." And yet I recognize its importance in the liturgical calendar and in the lives of so many people around the world. It is a holiday that invites us into the feelings of betrayal, loss, suffering, and rebirth that are so much a part of our own life stories. It encourages us to embrace the hope that comes from thinking about many kinds of resurrection; from embracing the idea (as Rev. Megan shared with us on Sunday) that in the end, "love wins." And that is surely a key message for us all, no matter our theological roots, no matter our current practices. Hope and love are forces that can guide us toward true salvation - and without them, we are likely left wandering (if not in the wilderness, then in a desert devoid of inspiration).

I've also resonated over the years with the stories that have guided our understanding of Jesus' good works in the world: his washing of the feet of the forgotten and the discarded of society, his belief in love as a guiding faith, and much more. So while I don't read the Bible on a daily basis, recently I have found myself particularly knocked off my pins (as it were) by a political candidate's hawking of the "God Bless the USA Bible," which is being sold in an effort, I believe, to fund his own legal expenses and to draw mostly white evangelicals into the fold to support him. This is the person who marched across the White House lawn five years ago to stand in front of a church and hold up a Bible, upside down, waving it at people. This is the person with the "Make America Pray Again" baseball cap, who can't quote a Bible verse or say which book he finds the most meaning from. This is the person who, like Sinclair Lewis' 1927 novel "Elmer Gantry" portrays, fast-talks and manipulates people into believing he is a person of faith, when all he really wants is their money and a way to influence society.

Rev. Jim Wallis, author and theologian, has just published a book which looks at these issues, called ["The False White Gospel: Rejecting Christian Nationalism, Reclaiming True Faith, and Refounding Democracy."](#) I plan to read it, and hope you will too. And because these issues of Christian Nationalism, the rising tide of facism, and challenges to our faith and our society are living loudly in my head, I hope to explore these behaviors in our society during an upcoming sermon.

I'd love to know what you think about them -[so I hope that you will write to me or make an appointment to talk more.](#) This stuff is about *all* of us, about our faith, our lives, our path into the future - which makes it surely worth our time to consider them more deeply, in this springtime of change and rebirth. Will you join me in this journey?

See you in church,
Deb



A Message from Rev. Megan Lynes - Parish Minister

I could not be more pleased that our Search Committee has selected a fabulous candidate, and that the very same candidate has chosen First Parish as their first choice! Sometimes it doesn't work out that way, and then a congregation enters a another year of interim ministry.

I am looking forward to the week our congregation and our candidate will spend together. (April 27th - May 5th.) There will be chances to experience worship led by our candidate and attend various gatherings. Please come, ask good questions, help the candidate get a good sense of who you are as a community, and take the time to learn more about our candidate when that information is available. (It's coming soon!)

After the service on May 5th, there will be a congregational vote about whether to call the candidate, and by that time the hope is that our congregation is unified in a feeling that "YES this is the minister we want!" The goal is for First Parish and the settled minister to enter into a covenant "to walk together in the ways according to love."

The candidate will also be looking to experience that feeling of YES by the end of their week with us. But in addition, they are hoping to see a very high percentage of the votes indicating that the congregation is *onboard*. When I was called in Bedford, it was recommended that at least 92% of the congregation voted yes. I tell you this not to scare you, but to give you information you may need. A minister may not choose to stay if numbers indicate that many do not think it a good match. Please take into account how hard the search committee has worked to learn about and vet our candidate. Please

remember that this is the Search Team chosen out of your own respect and trust and democratic process. And after the candidate's name is announced, do speak with the search team members about their endorsement and ask all the questions you can. It should be said aloud that the Search Team wants you to be able to vote yes. AND this needs to be what you think is right. Opt in to the process in any way you can.

And since it is the season of matches being made, I would like to also share with you my own news for next fall. I will be serving 3/4 time in a one year contract position as the minister at Harvard Unitarian Universalist Church, in Harvard, MA. It's 15 minutes from where I live in Stow, and along with being a lovely congregation, I feel I can balance parenting and ministry in a way that will work for this next chapter. I'm excited about it, but I will also miss you all! This year has been and continues to be so meaningful to me. You have won my heart, and I am not saying any goodbyes just yet!

With you on the journey,
Rev. Megan

Partner Organizations and Other News

Seeking flowers for Sunday Services!

Would you like to make our sanctuary even more lovely on Sundays by bringing flowers (or another artistic focal point) to our worship services? You could donate flowers to honor a loved one or to mark a meaningful occasion, or simply to help beautify our space.

Sign up here (and read all the details) [on this form](#). Thank you in advance!



The 2024 Pride Event in Waltham will be held on Sunday, June 16th on the Waltham Common from 11 AM to 4 PM. More info is here: <https://www.walthampride.org>.

Last year First Parish in Waltham had its first table at the event. What a great opportunity to connect with members of our LGBTQ+ community, and share how open and affirming our congregation truly is!

If you would you like to participate in 2024, please contact Jodi Anderson: jodimarmontanderson@gmail.com or see Jodi after Sunday worship at coffee hour.

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

One Thing You Can Do: Write postcards with us!



A simple non-partisan way to help democracy flourish is to share with people the dates, times and locations of upcoming elections. As our second action as a Good Trouble Congregation, we will be sending postcards to BIPOC voters in VA to encourage them to vote in the primary election. Primary voting promotes consistent voting habits, and greatly increases the likelihood of voting in the fall.

Postcards will be ordered this Friday, April 5. **We will gather in Whitcomb Hall to work on this project on Saturday, April 13.**

Reach out to Elisse Ghitelman at community.outreach@walthamuu.org if you're interested in finding out about ordering postcards for yourself, or participating on April 13.

Elisse Ghitelman,
Outreach Commissioner

An Invitation to Membership

Congratulations and welcome to Ken Johnson, our newest member as of March 28th!

Does First Parish feel like your spiritual home? **We would love to welcome you as a member too!**

Our congregation currently has around 100 official members. We, the members of the congregation, own the building, pass bylaws, self govern, articulate and actualize our mission, and support our congregation and its future in time, talent and treasure. **Only members can vote for our next settled minister.**

Are you struggling with issues that could use the support of another member of our congregation? 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. Our March contact person is Nancy Lawrence.

Please reach out to us if you believe we can help. We'd love to hear from you.
pastoralcare@walthamuu.org



Waltham UU Facebook Page



Waltham UU Webpage

If you have not yet become a member, would you consider the key role in our future you too could play? Finances should never be a reason not to become a member, because your status is not dependent on what you can give.

We'll welcome all new members on April 21st in church! Speak to Rev. Megan or Deb Weiner or a member of our Membership Team if you're interested in signing the official membership book or in hearing more. Come and join us!

Birthdays Among Us!



The Membership Committee is helping us celebrate birthdays as a congregation! Please let us know yours by emailing Gary Morrison:
membership.commissioner@walthamuu.org

- Dan Taylor 4/9
- Justin Kamal 4/13
- Daniel Lohta 4/16
- John Allen 4/17
- Jeremy Tougas 4/17
- Martha Creeden 4/24
- Colleen Bradley-MacArthur 4/25
- Muffy Young 4/26
- Roberta Trudeau 4/29
- Elisse Ghitelman 4/29
- Emily Weidman 4/29
- Zee Campbell 4/30

Ministry Staff Team

Parish Minister

Rev. Megan Lynes
617.276.7655
revmeganlynnes@walthamuu.org

Transitional Ministry Associate

Deborah Weiner
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Office Administrator /

Music and Choir Director

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or
musicdirector@walthamuu.org

Board Members

President, Board of Managers

Deb Jose
president@walthamuu.org

Assistant Treasurer

Dan DeHainaut
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Clerk

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Brenda Asis
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Music and Worship Commissioner

Bethany Templeton Klem
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Property

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Finance
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Dan Taylor
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Religious Education Commissioner
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Treasurer
Janet Riley
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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.

Stay connected on our Website, Facebook Page, or Instagram!
Like and follow us to get updates and news!



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

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