

THE MEETINGHOUSE NEWS

First Parish in Cambridge, Unitarian Universalist

March 2019

SAVE THE DATES!

First Parish is thrilled to announce that on **Saturday evening, April 6 at 7:00 PM**, we will host "Between War and Here," a powerful performance of music and memoir. This production is the result of a recent collaboration between the renowned musical group, Ensemble Galilei (EG), and two celebrated NPR war correspondents, Neal Conan and Ann Garrels. EG performs Scottish and Celtic music and original compositions, and for several years, some of their musicians have played for injured veterans and their families at Walter Reed Medical Center. They and the NPR journalists together will explore the impact of war through a combination of music, poetry and personal reflection. More information may be found on the EG website: <https://www.egmusic.com/between-war-and-here>

On Sunday, March 10, at 12:15, Carolyn Surrick, the founder of Ensemble Galilei, will join us in the Chapel to discuss the origins and goals of this project. She will offer us an opportunity to learn more about the performance and how it has impacted people.

"Between War and Here" at First Parish will be co-sponsored by the Social Justice Council, the Music Team, and the Cambridge Forum. Advance tickets will be available online through Brown Paper Tickets as well as at the door, for \$25, or pay-as-you-are-able. Proceeds will benefit the Special Operations Warrior Foundation (<https://specialops.org>), which provides educational support to the children of soldiers killed in war.

We enthusiastically urge members of the First Parish community to attend, and to spread the word to family, friends and neighbors. We also will invite representatives of Mass Peace Action and Veterans for Peace, and all will be available for informal conversation over light refreshments in the Parlor following the concert.

If you can help with set up, ushering or the reception on April 6, please contact:

Social Justice Council – Rosalie Anders (Rosalie.h.anders@gmail.com)

Music Team – Irene Merwin (irrom1@gmail.com) or Mara Vorhees (mvorhees@msn.com)

Cambridge Forum – Jane Sturtevant (sturjn@aol.com)

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CORNER

Our next **Lodestone Family Night** will be Friday, March 8th! It will be a potluck, include activities for all members of the family, and hopefully a great way to bring some light to the doldrums of late winter. You can RSVP and sign-up to bring something here:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0E4BAEA92CA0FA7-lodestone1>

New Family Breakfast

New to First Parish?

Enjoy a family-style breakfast and get to know the members of our RE Council on

Sunday, March 17 at 9:30am

In the Parlor

Please RSVP with any dietary restrictions and how many members of your family will attend, to

juliaqallogly@gmail.com.

Building our Spirit Play 2019-20 Teaching Team!

Would you like to join our youngest children next year in learning about the 7 Promises Unitarian Universalists make to each other? Teaching Spirit Play is a fantastic way to deepen your own understanding of our Principles and Sources, and you'll have fun along the way with our PreK-1st graders!

The spring New England training in Spirit Play has been set for March 23 in Sterling, MA:

<https://www.spirit-play.com/event/first-church-in-sterling/>

Online training is also available.

We are seeking a diversity of ages, identities, and parent/non-parents on this team. If this sounds like you, please contact teacher Corinne Foster cmmfoster@gmail.com or DRE Mandy Neff mneff@firstparishcambridge.org to learn more about joining the team.

Shared Offering for March

Our recipient for **March** is the **Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC)**.

UUSC advances human rights and social justice around the world, partnering with those who confront unjust power structures and mobilizing to challenge oppressive policies. Their work is grounded in the belief that all people have inherent power and dignity. UUSC is honored to partner with congregations to amplify social justice efforts through advocacy and engagement, long standing fundraising programs, and justice education programs and resources with the UU College of Social Justice. For more information visit uus.org.

MINISTRY TEAM UPDATES

Beyond Borders/Sin Fronteras and Environmental Justice Task Forces

BB/SF and EJTF are joining to present Tina Shull, a post-doc at Harvard University, on Sunday, March 24, after the service. The title of Tina's talk is "Who are Climate Refugees? Climate Change, Migration, and Borders." Tina will talk about the connections between climate change, migration, and increasing border enforcement around the world, with a focus on the US and migration from Latin America. She has studied and written extensively about this timely topic. A light lunch will be provided. Please join us on the 24th.

Building Ministry Team

- American Steeple, our roofing contractor, has ordered new downspouts for the South Wall (Church Street side) from their supplier. Installation will be scheduled when the product is received.
- 2 slate tiles came off the roof during the rain and wind storm on February 24. There was no other damage and American Steeple is aware of the issue.
- Architect David Torrey is working on a proposed agreement for our Negotiating Team to consider for the Mass Ave Tower & Steeple Project. We hope to have Mr. Torrey begin design work this Spring.

Fire of Commitment Team

POWER UP FIRST PARISH'S IMPACT



Each March members of our congregation commit to supporting First Parish financially. Every gift is valued. Every gift, no matter its size, is a way to express what our community means in the giver's life.

First Parish and our historic legacy building anchor Harvard Square. From here, our ministry and programs radiate positive impact into the world — a world much in need of community and healing.

What about First Parish brings you the most joy and satisfaction?

- Providing **sanctuary** for an immigrant woman and her children?
- Welcoming people in search of a **spiritual community** on Sundays?
- **Environmental justice** advocacy through influencing the legal process?
- Making and serving dinner to 100 food insecure adults each and every Tuesday?
- Fostering **faith formation** in our children and their families?
- Hosting the Y2Y **youth shelter**?
- Sustaining a warm **community** welcome to all?
- Attending a vigil together to work for **justice**?
- Or ...?

Your generosity powers the positive impact First Parish is able to have within and outside its walls. Click [HERE](#) to make a financial gift during March, or to make a commitment for giving over the next year.

The fire of commitment that blazes in our hearts empowers First Parish!

Fire of Commitment Team

Linda Clark, Karin Lin, Linda West

GBIO Task Force

At their recent retreat, the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization's (GBIO) leaders reflected about the organization's 2018 successes, including the passage of major state criminal justice legislation, beginning implementation of Boston's Community Preservation Act in support of affordable housing ownership, and the community benefits included in the merger approval of several major hospitals and community centers.

To help determine GBIO's 2019 focus, the organization conducted a series of hundreds of "house meetings" (small group discussions in an intimate setting). From these house meetings, *Health Care* emerged as an issue that our members feel passionately about and where the GBIO organization feels we can build our power and effect real change. First Parish's own congregational discussions held during this effort identified issues of health care costs, access, and mental health.

Marcia Hams is on GBIO's Health Care Strategy Team and is also board chair of Health Care for All (an effective non-profit organization which GBIO partnered with that led to the Massachusetts health care law). GBIO is seeking a lead person/s on health care in each member organization. Given Marcia's positions and responsibilities, we want a co-captain.

GBIO's second priority this year is to expand and deepen its power, effectiveness, and representativeness by *attracting many new GBIO members*: faith-based organizations, unions, and other entities that share GBIO's values and mission to implement social justice actions.

GBIO leverages its power, in large part, through its numbers of active members who participate in large meetings, contact their legislators, and provide credibility and legitimacy. To be in a greater position to use its power, GBIO wants to broaden its membership to include more diversity of viewpoints, faiths, race, class, and identities.

First Parish in Cambridge, like other current GBIO members, can play a major role in building a stronger and more representative GBIO organization by providing GBIO organizers and leaders with introductions to new people and institutions that share our concerns with climate action, immigration, racial equity/white supremacy. This opportunity to do grassroots organizing will enable GBIO, as well as us, to connect to and create partnerships with a wide variety of peoples and organizations that we would otherwise not meet or work with.

Several members of First Parish are very active in a GBIO Racial Equity/White Supremacy Group that sprang from the house meetings as an emerging issue of interest to some GBIO member organizations. This group is currently identifying and expecting to share our relevant activities (book and movie discussions; training sessions). Already we are inviting each other to upcoming events.

A GBIO Delegates Assembly is being scheduled for a date in April. We need to hear from you: Are you supportive of this 2019 direction? Do you have concerns or questions? Please share your views with Marcia Hams (marciahams@gmail.com); Chris McElroy (cmcelroy52@gmail.com); Tod Hibbard (hibbard79@gmail.com); or Margaret Drury (drurybischoff@comcast.net).

Intern Committee

For decades, First Parish has played an important role as a teaching congregation for future UU ministers. Our current intern, Will Williamson, is doing a full-time one year internship. While interns are formally supervised by a minister, the congregation itself plays an important role in the development and nurturing of an intern. Part of our responsibility is to form an internship committee that meets with the intern monthly, helps the intern develop his learning and service agreement and evaluates the intern's performance. The intern committee provides the intern with feedback and serves as a support for the intern. Will's intern committee is Julia Gallogly (chair), Rebecca Balder, Rashid Shaikh and Eileen Sullivan. If you have questions or feedback, please feel free to reach out to any of the intern committee members. You may have noticed a shift in recent weeks that Will is not spending as much time with us in Sunday worship. Will is focusing on learning new skills around Religious Education and Adult Education outside of Sunday worship. Look for opportunities to participate in some of the activities being coordinated by Will.

The Middle East Education Group

The **Middle East Education Group** invites to you to a special program after the service on **March 3**. Imam Khalil Abdur-Rashid and Samia Omar will lead the program, titled "Spiritual Transformation through a Harvard Mecca Trip: A Conversation with the Muslim Chaplain at Harvard, his wife and some students". In January, Harvard University sponsored a trip to Muslim holy sites for the first time. This type of trip is called Umrah, a pilgrimage to Mecca that is performed at any time of year (unlike the Hajj). The presentation will include pictures taken on the trip and comments from students who went. Light refreshments will be provided.

Looking ahead to April, there will be a pot-luck meeting of the group on the afternoon of **Sunday, April 7**, at the home of Grace Hall. Anyone who is interested is welcome to attend at this accessible location. More details will be provided closer to the date.

Save the date: On **Sunday, April 14**, Robin Brown will be presenting "Pilgrimage & Mystery: Mark Twain and Agatha Christie in the Middle East. This session will introduce memoirs by several well-known literary figures who traveled in the Middle East, with a particular focus on Mark Twain and Agatha Christie. We will consider their expressions of their experiences with reference to cross cultural interactions and their relevance today.

Women's Sacred Circle

Several members of the Women's Sacred Circle led a Winter Solstice ritual as part of the Holiday Fair at First Parish. Some participants asked staff if there could be a similar ritual in the future. If you are looking to celebrate the coming spring join us for a pagan ritual on **March 24th at 2pm in the Barn Room**. The ritual will be led by Brenda Leahy and Eileen Sullivan. It will include calling the directions, chants, movement and meditation. A coloring option will be available for children and those who prefer an active meditation. This is an opportunity to let winter go and set the seed of an intention to carry into the spring. All ages are welcome. The ritual will last about an hour followed by snacks and time to socialize.

Cambridge Forum

Happiness is a Choice You Make – John Leland

March 5 at 7:00 pm in the Meetinghouse

John Leland learned some valuable lessons from the oldest old while writing his NY Times column. Come hear his views on choosing happiness and join the spirited discussion. Free and Open to all.

GROUPS

Our Elders Group is open and meets on the 1st Tuesday of every month at 2:30 pm in the Chapel. Because of the holiday, this month the group meets on January 8. If you are interested, please contact Rev. Danielle at devminister@firstparishcambridge.org.

Spanish Conversation Group

¿Habla español? First Parish's Spanish Conversation Group meets on first and third Tuesdays of every month at 6:00 p.m. in the Baldwin Room. Come join us for informal conversation in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere. All levels are welcome and no commitment is required! For more information, email spanish@firstparishcambridge.org. ¡Nos vemos pronto!

The **Young Adult Group (YAG)** is a community for people ages 18-35. YAG meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 7pm upstairs in the Nursery and sometimes meets for food and social events on other occasions. Newcomers are always welcome. For more information visit our website cambridgeyag.org

Spring Potluck Suppers Open to Guests Signups!

Our fall potluck suppers at members' homes have been an easy and fun way to get acquainted with others in our community. This spring we are offering potluck suppers for interested members and newcomers on April 28th, May 5th or May 19th

Sign up here: <https://goo.gl/forms/85mQzhkGP9qeiImi2>. For each event guests will be selected at random, so everyone will have a chance to meet new people. Please sign up now so that you can participate in fabulous food, fun and making new friends!

Our theme this year is "Connection." The Potluck Team -- Valerie Fullum, Linda West and Sylvia Wheeler -- hope that the opportunity to meet new people at each potluck will encourage everyone to take advantage of this enjoyable way to expand your connections and make new friends at First Parish.