

# THE MEETINGHOUSE NEWS

*First Parish in Cambridge, Unitarian Universalist*

April 2019



## Where's Adam?

The last few months have been very full. As I shared with you in March, I have been ill with the flu and a fairly extreme sinus infection. But throughout, I have been engaged in a great deal of outreach and connection work to grow our presence in the community. I had long ago scheduled my travel, but having to miss two Sundays on top of that due to illness may have some folks wondering, like the puzzle, "where's Adam?" Here's a brief snapshot of some of what I've been up to since late February (Upcoming dates in **bold**):

### Guest Preaching/Speaking

- MIT LGBTQ Q&A (Feb 26)
- Queerness and Religion – Harvard House Discussion (Feb 27)
- Sanctuary Boston Ash Wednesday (March 6)
- All Souls Unitarian, Washington DC (March 10)
- Finding Our Way Home (March 13 – 16) – Conference Organizer
- Mass Sustainable Communities and Campuses (March 29)
- HUUMS (**April 5**)
- Between War & Here (**April 6**)

### Attendee/Participant

- National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day Roundtable (February 7)
- NAACP MLK Brunch (February 9)
- LGBTQ #MeToo Conference (**San Diego – April 27**)

### Planning/ Relationship Building

- GA 2020 (UUA planning for engaging Native cultures)
- Office of Sexual Assault Prevention and Response – Harvard Initiative on Healthy Masculinity
- Massachusetts/ Ponkapoag Tribe relationship building.
- First Church in Cambridge Stories Impossible to Tell (Slave history of First Parish/First Church)
- Cambridge Interfaith Sanctuary Coalition
- Y2Y (policy reboot and restructure for coming year)
  - o Bay Cove consultation (Feb 14)
  - o Rev. Rodney Dailey gang intervention consultation (February 27)
  - o Ruth Ellis Center consultation (**Detroit, April 8**)

In addition to these, I've been working to keep up a regular schedule of pastoral meetings and communication and planning for next year with the staff and board. I am in ongoing consultation with the Tuesday Meals Advisory Team to create a sustainable model of staffing and also monitoring the incredible progress of the Building Team as we have now begun work with David Torrey on an actual plan for the Mass Ave entrance. In the midst of this, I've felt a need to try to be more of a presence for our families and working with Mandy on strengthening our support for them. Last but not least, I've been trying to schedule my "startup weekend" which is supposed to be a time for the congregation to help me better understand how to minister to the community and set goals. The hope is for that to happen in early May.

This is all to say that the last couple of months have had me focused on sharing some of my/our work out in the world. I believe that the more we share with others about the magic we create in this place, the more resilient and robust our community will become. I promise you will see more of me over the next month and through the end of the year. My hope is that some of the planting I've been doing will bear some early fruit. It is hard work, but it is necessary, and it is my pleasure to put in the effort for this great community.

**Rev. Adam**

### **JOIN US ON APRIL 6**

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 Anne 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>

"Between War and Here" at First Parish is 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 \$20, 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 have invited representatives of local peace groups. 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](mailto:Rosalie.h.anders@gmail.com))  
Music Team – Irene Merwin ([irrom1@gmail.com](mailto:irrom1@gmail.com)) or Mara Vorhees ([mvorhees@msn.com](mailto:mvorhees@msn.com))  
Cambridge Forum – Jane Sturtevant ([sturjn@aol.com](mailto:sturjn@aol.com))

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CORNER

### Next Year in Religious Education

Over the past year in Religious Education, we have seen a lot of growth. New families are joining us, inspired by our new minister, our commitment to justice work, and Our Whole Lives sexuality education programs. So in planning for the coming year, we have asked for and received lots of feedback.

This winter at our Family Feedback session, parents expressed happiness with the active learning taking place in the Theme (elementary) level, including offering choices to children. They also appreciated the Family Conversation Starter questions for home discussion in our weekly newsletter. They would love to see some more depth in the framing and reflections on the different activities. They also would like to see more spirituality, including more connection to the Sources and Principles, and a stronger emphasis on world religious stories. Parents want their children to understand why we make certain moral choices and do certain activities *as Unitarian Universalists*.

Also, the parents recognize that as volunteers, leading a conversation when they don't feel confident in their own Unitarian Universalism yet is challenging. So there was a call for adult offerings of faith formation, from workshops, to a suggested reading list, to addressing "UU 101" concepts during worship.

Our Spirit Play teaching team also did a mid-year assessment. There was strong interest in a deep dive into the first Source and seventh Principle in the rest of this year. Spirit Play translates these for our youngest children as "The Great Mystery" and "Valuing our home, Earth." Teachers asked, where do we find wonder? Where have other religions found wonder, and how do they think about the Mystery? What they could bring that would address their own understanding of Mystery, Spirit, Wonder and Awe? The answers included bringing in wisdom tales from mystical traditions such as the Sufis, and helping children experience wonder and mystery through explorations of nature, music, and yoga planned for this spring.

It was striking that both groups independently asked for more depth and exploration of spirituality, including our Principles and Sources. They are both seeking stories and discussions with the explicit language that younger people need to think about concepts of morality, the holy, Mystery, and wonder.

When children learn to quiet themselves and engage in worship and connection with something larger and higher than themselves, they are learning valuable skills they can get nowhere else but their faith community. Our members are typically active, engaged families with many possibilities in their school and neighborhood for family activities. They choose First Parish because it can give them something no place else can - a community to help them experience an open concept of the sacred and raise Unitarian Universalists.

Our curriculum readers took all this and more into consideration as they began their selection process for next year's program. They considered the values of respect, peace, love, and safety that we strive to impart. They considered the capacity of our RE Council, staff, and teachers. They considered our missional commitment to building a multicultural, spirit-filled community that works for justice, fosters spiritual curiosity and faith formation, shares joy, heals brokenness, and celebrates the sacred in all.

The RE Council and curriculum readers propose the following programs for next year:

**2019-20 Curriculum  
First Parish in Cambridge:  
Exploring Our Six Sources**

**Spirit Play**      PreK-1/homeschool equivalent

Spirit Play is a religious education method, founded in the Montessori Method, that helps children explore questions of the spirit: Where did we come from? What are we doing here? How do we choose to live our lives? What happens when we die? Spirit Play uses a ritual that includes music, a weekly spiritual story to explore, feasting, and then lets children make real choices for themselves in a teacher-prepared environment. These choices help children understand and integrate the story into their own lives. Spirit Play is a Unitarian Universalist version of Godly Play, developed by Dr. Nita Penfold and Beverly Leute Bruce.

**Moral Tales** (16 sessions)      2-3/homeschool equivalent

Every day our children go forth into a complex world where they are often faced with difficult decisions and situations. Moral Tales attempts to provide children with the spiritual and ethical tools they will need to make choices and take actions reflective of their Unitarian Universalist beliefs and values. A UUA Tapestry of Faith program by Alice Anacheka-Naseman and Elisa Davy Pearmain.

**Toolbox of Faith** (16 sessions)      4-6/homeschool equivalent

What tools does Unitarian Universalism offer for the challenges of life? Children discover what aspects of UU faith are helpful to them, developing a toolbox of faith. Each session includes hands-on exploration of a Tool of the Day and engagement with a central story, from the Flashlight of Justice to the Hammer of Power. A UUA Tapestry of Faith program by Katie Covey.

**Our Whole Lives**      7-9/homeschool equivalent

Honest, accurate information about sexuality changes lives. It dismantles stereotypes and assumptions, builds self-acceptance and self-esteem, fosters healthy relationships, improves decision making, and has the potential to save lives. For these reasons and more, we are proud to offer Our Whole Lives (OWL), a comprehensive, lifespan sexuality education curricula.

**Youth Group**

High School/homeschool equivalent

Our high school Youth Group designs and leads much of its own programming, from fun trips to serious discussions to volunteering and advocacy. You might catch them teaching Spirit Play, fundraising for the Walk for Hunger, leading worship, or having a check-in with friends. Participants and parents share that Youth Group can be an important escape valve during a very stressful time in their lives, without academic expectations or social pressures. Join us for a chance to make deep and lasting friendships, work for justice, and just have a good time!

The curriculum for our middle elementary/homeschool equivalent years "Moral Tales" and "Toolbox of Faith" are both shorter than our program year. This gives us an opportunity to do special programming specific to First Parish and our needs.

We will be seeking community feedback for these spring 2020 offerings. We're considering several wonderful options:

- justice advocacy skills
- social media awareness and literacy
- cutting-edge mental health programs
- UU Identity, from the innovative Chalice Camp program, and
- the deep work of dealing with death and loss.

Please look for our survey coming out soon, and give us *your* feedback!

**It's the Annual Easter Egg Hunt!**

Please join us for our traditional children's Easter Egg Hunt in the Old Burying Ground. The hunt is hosted by our Junior and Senior Youth, immediately following the worship service on April 21. They and the Easter Bunny need your help with 2 things:

Can you **join the Grounds Cleanup Crew** on Saturday, April 20 from 9-11am? We need a team of 3-4 adults who can pick up trash and make the space safe for our little ones! Please email [mneff@firstparishcambridge.org](mailto:mneff@firstparishcambridge.org) to sign up.

**Please donate candy** in the marked bins on **April 14 and 21** so the youth can stuff and hide eggs! Small, peanut-free candy, wrapped if possible, is preferred. Thanks for your generosity!

## The Egg Hunt

Following the service on April 21, children should bring baskets and gather in the Library for directions. Young children will have a special area for their own hunt. Parents and guardians, please help your older children respect this cordoned-off area so our littlest ones have a chance to enjoy their own hunt! During the hunt, children are asked to be mindful of our Covenant and our orange promise to each other to "Be kind in all you do" - to notice how many of us are participating and taking only your fair share.

***If your child has food sensitivities or allergies,*** please see the youth after your hunt to trade in your candy for allergen-free treats.

Thanks and Hoppy Hunting!

## Shared Offering for April

Our recipient for **April** is the **Louis D. Brown Peace Institute**: [www.ldbpeaceinstitute.org](http://www.ldbpeaceinstitute.org). Founded in 1994 by Tina Chery, the mother of Louis D. Brown who was killed at age 15 by gun violence in 1993, the Institute's mission is to be a center of healing, teaching, and learning for families and communities impacted by murder, trauma, grief, and loss. Their principles are those that many of us strive for and believe in: Love, Unity, Faith, Hope, Courage, Justice, and Forgiveness.



In addition to being the Shared Offering recipient for April, the Institute will again sponsor the **Mother's Day Walk for Peace**, and we're hoping many from our congregation will participate.

First Parish comes together to support the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute by walking across Boston as part of the Mother's Day Walk for Peace.

Sign Up Now to Walk and/or to Donate at this link <https://ldbpeace.z2systems.com/fpcambuu>

That will bring you to the First Parish Cambridge page where you can register and donate. **All walkers must register.**

**Registration cost this year is \$10 per walker, however no one will be turned away for lack of funds. When you register, be sure to select First Parish CambridgeUU as your team. At the end of your registration there will be an opportunity to donate.**

Can't do the walk? You can still donate on our page. You may also donate through the church by writing a check payable to First Parish and write "Walk for Peace" in the memo line. If you have any questions about registering or donating, either come to our table in Social Hour or contact [Chris McElroy](mailto:cmcelroy52@gmail.com) at [cmcelroy52@gmail.com](mailto:cmcelroy52@gmail.com). All details on the walk are available at [mothersdaywalk4peace.org](http://mothersdaywalk4peace.org)

The [Mother's Day Walk for Peace](#) has been gathering those affected by gun violence and their supporters for 23 years. Join us on Mother's Day to demand both an end to this violence and dignity and compassion for all families impacted by murder.

The Mother's Day Walk is also the Peace Institute's most important fundraising event. They're asking us to invest in community-based solutions to a complex problem. In 2019, their goal is to raise \$400,000 for our critical programs and services.

Invest in peace this Mother's Day - Sunday May 12, 2019

The Mother's Day Walk for Peace started in 1996 so families of murdered children and young people could receive support and love from their neighbors. It is a center for healing, teaching, and community organizing. It provides vital crisis management, counseling, and funeral and burial assistance to family members of homicide victims.

## MINISTRY TEAM UPDATES

### **Beyond Borders/Sin Fronteras and Environmental Justice Task Forces**

Beyond Borders/Sin Fronteras and Environmental Justice Task Force are joining to present a talk by Tina Shull, a post-doc at Harvard University, on **Sunday, April 7**, after the pot-luck lunch. 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. Dessert will be provided. Please join us.

The **Environmental Justice Task Force** invites you to join us for a talk by State Senator Marc R. Pacheco on **Tuesday, April 23**, at 7:00 p.m. in the Meetinghouse. Senator Pacheco is the founding Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Global Warming and Climate Change, and is Senate Vice Chair of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy (TUE). Senator Pacheco initiated, authored and secured passage of the Global Warming Solutions Act, and has been a leading champion for alternative energy and greenhouse gas reduction legislation. The Senator will talk with us about current legislative proposals and strategies for implementing the Global Warming Solutions Act, especially in the environment of the Green New Deal and the climate action urgency highlighted in the latest U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report. He will also discuss how we can best support state legislative proposals for the climate!

### **Building Ministry Team**

Torrey Architecture has begun preliminary design work on the Massachusetts Avenue Wall and Tower Project. On March 26, Existing Conditions Surveys, Inc. was at First Parish to begin work to provide CAD drawings of the building exterior using 3D laser scanning technology. These drawings will help the architectural team by providing editable detailed exterior elevations of the Meetinghouse. Schematic design by David Torrey will continue throughout the spring.

## Fire of Commitment Team

### THE FIRE OF COMMITMENT BURNS BRIGHT



As we welcome April, our team thanks all who have made financial commitments to support First Parish's programs and ministry. During March you stepped up to empower our congregation!

During March commitments came in that totaled over  
**\$150,000**

We reached half of our dollar goal for the campaign -- \$300,000 -- during the month. So will we stop at half? Of course not.

We look for 100% of congregation members to commit to give what they can. Every gift is valued. Every gift, no matter its size, is a way to express what our community means in the giver's life.

If you have not yet made a financial commitment this year, make one now on our [Fire of Commitment Page](#).

With gratitude,  
Fire of Commitment Team: Linda Clark, Karin Lin, Linda West

## The Middle East Education Group

On **Sunday, April 7**, there will be a pot-luck meeting of the group in the afternoon 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.

## Safety Team

Our newly formed Safety Team has begun work to ensure a safe environment throughout our building. This team (Valerie Fullum, Jan Puibello, Kate Ryan, Jamie Wilson) are working with the staff to develop policies and procedures. Some concrete changes that have happened since our first meeting include:

- An AED unit has been installed in the hallway between the Meetinghouse and the Parish House.
- Signage indicating fire extinguisher locations has been added in both buildings.

- To ensure safety on Sunday mornings, especially for our RE Program, the 3 Church Street doors are now locked at 10:30 am. A staff member or volunteer is in the front office from 10:30 – 10:45 to allow access for latecomers. This change was made in part upon the recommendation of Cambridge Police.
- A preliminary review of our Safe Congregation Policy is underway
- Work has begun on ensuring stocked First Aid Kits are easily accessible on each level of the building.

### **Food Solutions New England Racial Equity Challenge**

Discussions on April 7, 14 and 21

Issues of racial equity and white supremacy are baked into our everyday lives, even into the systems that get food from the farm to the dinner table. For 21 days, starting on Monday, April 1, Food Solutions New England will email short, daily readings, videos or audio files that tackle this issue and challenge us to see our food in a new light. Join us for three Sundays starting April 7 after church to discuss the week's readings and how we can act to increase equity in local food systems.

To sign up for the challenge, visit <http://www.foodsolutionsne.org>, and if you're interested in joining the weekly discussions, email Ian Evans: [jevans272@gmail.com](mailto:jevans272@gmail.com)

## **GROUPS**

**Our Elders Group** is open and meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://cambridgeyag.org)

## **GENERAL ASSEMBLY DELEGATES NEEDED**

Each year the Unitarian Universalist Association holds its annual meeting, General Assembly. This year's GA will be held in Spokane, WA from June 19-23. First Parish can send 4 delegates.

The theme for this year's GA is *The Power of We*. In a time of great challenge and heartbreak in our world, what does our faith demand from us? We will explore the power, possibility, purpose, struggle and joy of finding the path forward together as Unitarian Universalists.

If you'd like to be a delegate, please submit a request to the Board indicating how long you've been a member of First Parish and why you'd like to attend. The Board will select delegates at their April 16 meeting. First Parish does provide funds for registration costs of delegates. Send an email to [Board@firstparishcambridge.org](mailto:Board@firstparishcambridge.org).