

THE MEETINGHOUSE NEWS

First Parish in Cambridge, Unitarian Universalist

December 2017

Reflections from Our Lead Minister, Adam Lawrence Dyer



Community Care

As we approach the end of this year our theme is “holding.” What does it mean to be “held”; to be embraced and supported certainly, but also to be held accountable and held in relationship? When so many people have experienced the fraying of relationships in our volatile political climate, we may find great strength and resilience through this exercise. In addition, although this is a season of joy and reunion for some, it is a time of stress and isolation for others. In asking you to consider the question of what it means to be held, we are hoping that the First Parish community can live by

example and not only revel in personal joy, but make sure that we respect the needs and sensitivities of those for whom this represents a particularly troubling time. A few important things to remember are: listen first, never make the assumption that someone has traditional family, or that they would want to have a traditional family structure, have compassion and patience...these can go a long way to helping others feel held.

In this spirit, there are a couple of community relationships I also want to highlight.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:

- December is always a challenging month for the Y2Y shelter. Temperatures are dropping, guests may be feeling more isolated and staffing is a challenge. I encourage you all to reach out to volunteer with Y2Y when you can. You can sign up [here](#).
- Tuesday Meals continues to thrive and support people in our community, but there is always a need for volunteers particularly in the evening. Pam and the team do beautiful work that is one of the very concrete ways in which we show up in this community. To find out more feel free to reach out to me or Carol.

HOMELESS COURT:

- On December 11, we will begin hosting the Homeless Court once a month in the parlor. I was approached by Cambridge Police and Judge Sragow last month when the original location for this innovative effort needed to change due to location. This is a court process that serves as an intervention rather than a punishment so that people who are living outdoors are connected with services to help them avoid incarceration. (Read more here: [CAMBRIDGE HOMELESS COURT](#)). Although volunteers are NOT needed for this, you should know that this is one new way in which we are showing up for the community at large.

All in all, I know that each and every one of you cares immensely. This is what makes this community so beautiful. Remember to be gentle with each other. Remember what a blessing and a privilege it is to be able to hold each other through this season and through these times.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CORNER

Shared Offering in December

Our children have chosen this month's Shared Offering recipient, **Rice Sticks and Tea**, and will continue a partnership with them all year.

Rice Sticks and Tea (RST) is Boston's only food pantry program serving culturally-appropriate food to indigent Asia-American households. Operated out of the Arlington Street Church as a program of the Asian American Civic Association, a non-profit agency, RST provides about 100 households each month with bags of nutritious food such as jasmine rice, dried and canned vegetables such as mushrooms obtained from a Chinatown supermarket, as well as food products from the Greater Boston Food Bank, of which RST is an agency member.

Each year, RST has a holiday party for its clients at which clients and their children are each provided with a holiday gift. Rice Sticks and Tea relies on donations from Project Bread as well as corporations and individuals. www.ricesticksandtea.org.

Rebecca Lee will be joining us December 3 to do an announcement for the congregation and then speak with the children of RE.

Senator Mike Barrett on December 10!

The Environmental Justice Task is excited to present State Senator Mike Barrett right here in our Chapel on Sunday December 10, to discuss important legislation. Carbon Pricing is one of the most effective ways of reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). The carbon fee puts a price on carbon. Those who use the most carbon pay the most, those that use the least will pay less or receive a rebate. This idea has been gaining ground over the few years. Carbon pricing is considered as effective as increasing renewable energy or efficiency as a means of decreasing carbon emissions.

http://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/pricing-carbon?cid=EXT_WBEmailShare_EXT

The House and Senate bills are presently in committee. It is very important to get the bills out of committee to be considered by the legislature in the spring of 2018. If the bill is allowed to die in Committee, it will not be brought up again until 2020, two years we cannot afford to lose.

UU Mass Action along with activists from several local churches are organizing their parishioners to urge their reps and senators to sponsor this bill. The more signatories to a bill, the less likely it is to die in committee.

The Environmental Justice Task Force members invite you to join us in this effort. If you are unable to come hear Senator Barrett, please speak with one of us during coffee hour on December 3 or contact either mlynch4@icloud.com or gingerryan11@gmail.com. We can give you letter writing or phone call guidelines.

To Nourish and Serve our Community

When Adam Dyer received an introductory visit from Cambridge's new police commissioner, Branville Bard, he asked how First Parish might further serve our community. From that initial courtesy call an idea was hatched that will bring the Homeless Session of the Cambridge District Court, presided over by First Justice Roanne Sragow, to First Parish each month.

Beginning December 11, the Homeless Session of the Cambridge District Court will meet in our Helverson Parlor. Since its inception eight years ago, this special court, which brings together court officials, social service providers, and police officers to focus as a group on each homeless individual's particular needs, has reduced recidivism and provided housing and services to each person coming before it.

First Parish welcomes this new initiative that is so well aligned with our mission.

Special Congregational Business Meeting December 17

Authorizing First Parish to Ordain our Minister

At a ceremonial event on Saturday, January 13 Adam Lawrence Dyer will be ordained by First Parish as a Unitarian Universalist minister and installed as our Lead Minister.

The Unitarian Universalist Association's ordination and installation manual defines ordination as "the act by which a person becomes a minister." In UU polity, authority to ordain ministers is vested only in congregations. A congregation intending to ordain a minister is required to vote to do so at a business meeting.

Members will vote to authorize First Parish in Cambridge to ordain Adam at a brief business meeting on December 17.

All members should plan to attend this meeting, to be held in the meetinghouse directly after the service. Authorizing Adam's ordination is the only item to be taken up, so the meeting should be brief.

As this is a business meeting at which a vote will be taken, a quorum of voting members is required to be present. Please mark your calendar and attend this meeting.

Signups for Potluck Suppers for Adam to Close December 8th

With the great response to our Welcome Potluck Suppers for Adam, we now have 85 members, friends and newcomers who have signed up for one of the ten evenings scheduled from November 5th to March 25th. There are still some spaces at several upcoming suppers and we are working to be sure that everyone who would like to attend will have a space. Please sign up on our website (<http://firstparishcambridge.org/testing/sunday-suppers-to-welcome-adam/>) by Friday, December 8th so that we have your name and preferred dates to help us finalize the placements for the remaining suppers.

We'd like to have all members and newcomers interested in becoming a part of our community get acquainted with our new minister Adam Lawrence Dyer and this series of informal gatherings is a great way to do that and meet others in our community.

Most Sunday supper gatherings are scheduled in a member's home (see schedule below). One event is scheduled at First Parish to provide accessible space for all interested in coming.

Remaining Sunday Supper Dates

Date	Location	Host(s)	No. of Guests
Dec 10	Inman Sq Cambridge	Rashid Shaikh & Sharon DeVos	7
Dec 17	Somerville	Grace Hall	6
Jan 7	Arlington	Jennifer Griffith & Linda Clark	7
Jan 28	Watertown	Robin Brown	8-12
Feb 11	No. Cambridge	Susan Shepherd & Marcia Hams	10
Feb 25	Somerville	Allegra & Laura Heath-Stout	15
Mar 11	No. Cambridge	Cade Murray & Karin Lin	8
Mar 25	First Parish Cambridge Harvard Sq	Volunteer Team	50

To sign up, visit our [website](#) where you will be asked to choose one event that is close to where you live if possible so that you can get acquainted with others in your "neighborhood". If you are unable to attend an event in your neighborhood, please choose one that is convenient for you. Spaces are limited so you may be asked to join another location. You will be contacted by the host who will coordinate the meal arrangements and guests will be asked to contribute a food or beverage item. Potlucks are a great way to meet new friends and learn about our First Parish community!

The Middle East Education Group

The Middle East Education Group encourages you to attend two events in early December concerning Muslims and Islamophobia.

Sunday, December 3, 2017 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

"Islam and the Beloved Community," a talk by Samer Nasereddin

Presented by Theodore Parker Church Social Action Committee

Each year, the Theodore Parker Lecture brings a faith leader to Theodore Parker Church to address a timely social issue from a prophetic faith perspective. Join us this year to hear Samer Nasereddin, MAS Youth Programs Director at the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center (ISBCC), Muslim Spiritual Advisor at Northeastern University and Muslim Co-Chaplain at MIT.

LOCATION

Theodore Parker Unitarian Church
1859 Centre Street
West Roxbury, MA 02132

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/islam-and-the-beloved-community-a-talk-by-samer-nasereddin-tickets-39353497370>

Tuesday December 5 at 5:30 PM.

The Middle East Education Group at First Parish Cambridge is a co-sponsor of this event at Harvard Law School.

Muslim Bans, Refugee Bans, Ending DACA – A Threat to All Our Freedoms How Did We Get Here – and What Can We Do?

Location and time: Tuesday, December 5, 2017
5:30pm – 6:00pm Check-in and Refreshments
6:00pm – 8:00pm Panel Discussion
Harvard Law School, Hauser Hall, Room 102

The Muslim and Refugee bans are discriminatory and unconstitutional. U.S. District Judge Derrick Watson, in Honolulu, wrote that the Muslim Ban 3.0 Executive Order "plainly discriminates based on nationality" and would be "detrimental to the interests of the United States." The Trump Administration wants to negotiate DACA protections for building the Wall. These legislation attempts are part of a continuum of exclusionary, xenophobic and racist policies that promote white supremacy and discrimination on the basis of faith, national origin, and immigration status.

As arguments continue in the courtrooms, it is vital that communities continue to resist. Everyone has a role in defending a welcoming and inclusive America. Think you can't do anything? You can!

Come participate in an important discussion on how we got here, what's at stake, and what actions you can take.

THE 2017 FIRST PARISH AUCTION WAS A SUCCESS!

By Kathy Watkins

The 2017 First Parish Auction was a great success! Thanks to everyone that donated and bid on items, **we raised over \$18,500!** Stop by the **auction table on Dec 3rd and Dec 10th** or email Auction@FirstParishCambridge.org to pay your invoice; pickup your basket; reserve a spot in one of the remaining dinners and events; or reserve one of the remaining services. First come, first serve on the remaining items. Help us increase the total raised to \$20,000!

Every year the Auction furthers our mission of **creating community at First Parish** through shared planning of dinners and coming together with other members of our community to enjoy amazing food and company. The Auction also raises critical funds for the **operating budget** and supports the **Tuesday Meals Program**. Thanks for participating and we look forward to seeing you at one of the upcoming events!

Available Places in Dinners and Events – www.firstparishcambridge.org/auction:

Alfred Hitchcock Movie Night. Friday, February 2nd at 7:00pm. 1 spot available
 Dinner You Can Eat. Saturday, February 3rd. 2 spots available
 Spring Sangria Party. Saturday, June 9th. 3 spots available
 Pizza and Board Games. Saturday, March 17th. 12 spots available
 Italian Baked Pasta Dinner. Saturday, April 14th 19 spots available.
 Saturday Brunch Saturday, April 21st. 15 spots available.
 BBQ. Saturday, July 14th. 4 spots available.
 Tarot Card Evening. Saturday, March 10th. 2 spots available.
 A Workshop on Aging Gracefully. Wednesday, April 4th. 1 spot available.
 An Afternoon at the Opera. Sunday, April 22nd.

Available Services (1 spot for each of these) – www.firstparishcambridge.org/auction:

60-Minute Energy Session. Mutually convenient time March and July 2018.
 Academic Writing Skills Tutoring. Mutually convenient time.
 QuickBooks Training. Mutually convenient time between Jan and March 31, 2018.
 Pet Sitting. Mutually agreeable date between February and October 2018.

Invoices Sent:

Invoices for any items you won were emailed the week of November 27. Stop by the auction table on December 3rd or 10th to pay or ask any questions about your winning items.

RESERVE REMAINING FLAT-RATE EVENTS OR SERVICES:

Auction Table: December 3rd and 10th
 Email: Auction@FirstParishCambridge.org
 Website for Full List of Remaining Items: www.firstparishcambridge.org/auction

Journey with Immigrants in our Community

This fall, members of Beyond Borders/Sin Fronteras have been featured at sanctuary events hosted by the Unitarian Universalist congregations in Watertown and Concord. We shared our stories and the strategies our congregations are pursuing. In addition, the Watertown congregation collected \$700 to support the Cambridge Interfaith Sanctuary Coalition (CISC)!

Members of the CISC are also developing an initiative to accompany people who are facing hearings at the immigration court in Boston. This strategy has been effective in persuading some judges to take a more humane approach in their decisions. If you would like to learn more about this initiative, contact Peter Lowber at plowber@hotmail.com.

Women's Writing Group

The women's writing group seeks newcomers, please kindly post the following in the weekly bulletin. Thank you, Heidi Meyer

We warmly welcome you to join the Women's Writing Group, in the Margaret Fuller Room, mezzanine level on the elevator; the next biweekly Monday night meetings are: Dec. 4 and 18, and run from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Please contact Heidi Meyer, facilitator, at h.meyer@comcast.net for more details; the opportunity to freely explore your writing voice in a supportive, non-critiquing environment, awaits you!!

Elders Group

The next meeting of the First Parish Elders Group will be on Tuesday, **December 5** at 2:30 pm in the Chapel. We will be examining many topics that affect our senior community, including medical issues, social issues and actions and activities that elders can participate in. All elders are invited. Please join us. Questions? Email Rev. Danielle at devminister@firstparishcambridge.org

New Member Classes

New member classes will be offered on **December 3** and **December 10** from 12:30 pm until 2:00 pm in the Barn Room. If you are exploring membership at First Parish please plan to attend. We are looking forward to getting to know you and letting you know about us.

Please RSVP to devminister@firstparishchurch.org so we can plan for lunch. Lunch and child care will be provided. If you have questions, please contact Rev. Danielle at [617-876-7772 x204](tel:617-876-7772) or by email at devminister@firstparishcambridge.org.

The Sanctuary Boston is back!

If you want to enjoy a unique worship experience, you are invited twice a month to Sanctuary Boston. This spirited and thoughtful spiritual community is led by a young team of multi-cultural leaders who welcome everyone, inclusive of age, race, gender, ethnicity, ability or income. First Parish Cambridge is thrilled to continue our enthusiastic support of this wonderful community by welcoming Sanctuary Boston into our space every other gathering (see the calendar below). We also look forward to sharing a Sunday morning worship led by the Sanctuary team later this year. Enjoy! <http://thesanctuaryboston.org/>

December 6, 6:00 pm: Cambridge (3 Church St., Harvard Square)

December 20, 6:00 pm: Boston (66 Marlborough St., Back Bay)

Candlelight Vigil for Victims of Gun Violence

On Thursday December 14, 2017 at 6:15pm, First Church in Boston at 66 Marlborough Street will be hosting a candlelight vigil honoring all victims of gun violence. The service will be held in conjunction with the December 6 National Vigil for All Victims of Gun Violence at St. Marks in Washington D.C. and similar vigils in many states. This nationwide event was conceived by the Newtown Foundation in partnership with Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence, along with Massachusetts Coalition for Gun Violence Prevention, Everytown Survivors Network and B-Peace for Jorge. December 14 is the 5th anniversary of the Sandy Hook Elementary School tragedy. Offering their reflections are Bishop Alan Gates, Rev. Stephen Kendrick, author Greg Gibson and State Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz. The event will include a special candle lighting for the 2017 Boston victims of gun violence.

Paine Senior Services

"I do believe that we're all connected, and that to help somebody is one of the best things you can do" - John O'Neil, 2017 Paine Senior Services Legacy Award recipient

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Since 1905, Paine Senior Services (PSS) has been dedicated to serving Cambridge seniors (60+) *regardless of their ability to pay a fee*. PSS does not receive federal, state, municipal, or insurance funding and offers sliding scale fees. PSS may even waive the fee in cases of financial hardship and other special circumstances.

PSS has been able to do this because of a farsighted gift left to us by Jeannie Warren Paine in 1905, designed to help Cambridge residents. This initial gift has been carefully preserved and administered, allowing PSS to serve thousands of people, asking for modest fees only from those who can afford to pay.

PSS has been able to minimize administrative costs so that ninety percent of our budget goes directly to the provision of services. In addition, we are so appreciative that donations and grants have supplemented PSS's resources from the endowment, enabling us to minimize the impact of the true cost of services on those seniors we serve.

In spite of our careful stewardship, PSS needs your help. Please consider supporting PSS with a donation and please share this letter with others who care about the dignity and wellbeing of our seniors.

With your help, we can ensure that seniors have someone to help them navigate our complex world.

We thank you for your support!

Sincerely,

Elizabeth F. Aguilo, LICSW, Executive Director, Paine Senior Services