

THE MEETINGHOUSE NEWS

First Parish in Cambridge, Unitarian Universalist

January 2018

Reflections from Our Lead Minister, Adam Lawrence Dyer



Happy New Year!

May 2018 bring you and yours many new blessings in a world that is still magical and inspiring!

Our worship theme for this month and February is “Growth”. As part of that theme, I would like to answer a question that has come up several times since September: why do we include Spanish in our service? This is actually a reasonable question to me. When you look at the demographic breakdown of Cambridge (54.4% white, 17.9% Asian, 10.6% black, 9.6 % Hispanic, 3.8 % more than one race, .5% American Indian¹) the indication is that we should really be looking at other languages first. But having worked closely with demographics, I know that they can be messy and misleading. What is more, demographics aren’t the only reason to include other languages and cultures in our spiritual journey.

One of the reasons I have decided to keep Spanish in our services is because, along with Dutch and French, it was among the first European languages spoken in the Americas as part of the colonial project. I believe that language is one avenue for us to continue our work of de-colonizing our experience. Most of us are language lazy and we expect everything in English. We struggle when someone has an “accent”. But this is another opportunity for us to live our values. The more we hear other languages spoken and the more accustomed we become to not having English language privilege, the more we can understand the experience of those who live in translation every day. While living in London and then San Diego, I learned an important lesson. Someone’s “accent” when trying to speak a language to which they are not their problem; instead, it is my challenge to have bigger, less lazy and more welcoming ears. Keeping Spanish in our services is just one small step in that direction.

In this spirit, I would like to invite people who have native or fluent non-English language skills to share their language with the community in our worship moving forward. Maybe it’s a reading in Mandarin or a song in Russian. Maybe someone wants to take the time to translate Spirit of Life into a third and a fourth language. Is there someone who wants to help us bring sign language back to the services? I would love to have the language of the Wampanoag as a regular part of our Sunday if we can do it right. The key is to find ways to share language that are not appropriative and that authentically enhance our experience and understanding. I look forward to your creative ideas and again Happy New Year!

Adam Lawrence Dyer

¹ City Data - Cambridge

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CORNER

JANUARY IS FOR GROWING



This month we explore a counter-intuitive theme for winter: growing.

Deep in the earth, under the snow, bulbs lie waiting. If they are indoors with us, as these bulbs from our Homecoming ritual of libation and blessing, they are now indeed growing. If they are outdoors, they concentrate nutrients in their rich bulbs and hold their breath, waiting for the warmth of spring to let them know it is time to emerge.

Even if our children are not outgrowing their clothes as fast during these winter months, they are still growing and developing. As our RE teachers explore in more depth, no matter the season, children and youth are developing cognitively, morally and religiously. Their questions shift from the "why" of early childhood through wondering about facts and rules, fairness and justice in the elementary years, to challenging adults to live up to our UU ideals as youth.

I recently enjoyed this article on encouraging a growth mindset for children:

<http://99u.com/articles/37669/if-youre-not-failing-youre-not-growing>

As a child, inventor Sara Blakely would have dinner with her parents, and every night her father would ask what she had failed at that day. His point was that frequent failures were required for expanding your courage and thinking - for stretching yourself. In his viewpoint, failure was a success, because it showed you had been trying new things. I was certainly inspired to add a new topic of conversation to the dinner table, and to reframe failure for my own children.

And of course, these forms of growth do not end in the adult years! We continue to explore questions of meaning and purpose, life and death; of transcendent experiences; and of the deepening power of community as we age.

As part of this year's professional development, I am taking a course through Still Harbor in Spiritual Direction. Spiritual Direction is a contemplative practice of "listening to a person's life story with an ear for the movement of the spirit or sacred." Spiritual Directors help individuals or small groups explore their stories and inner richness through active listening, art and gentle movement exercises, and silence and prayer. In March through May, I will be offering spiritual direction to two individual or small group directees, with supervision from Still Harbor instructors. Both the directees and I will be growing as we move through this nourishing process! If you are interested in this experience, please contact me at dre@firstparishcambridge.org to sign up.

Here's to our growth, even in the dead of winter!

Mandy

Shared Offering for January

The Shared Offering recipient for January is **Action for Community and Environment (ACE)**. **ACE** builds the power of communities of color and low-income communities in Massachusetts to eradicate environmental racism and classism, create healthy, sustainable communities, and achieve environmental justice. It is a movement of people who have been excluded from decision-making that confronts power directly and demands fundamental changes in the rules of the game, to achieve a healthy environment. ACE is led by the constituents it serves in Roxbury, Greater Boston and Massachusetts, and its youth empowerment program, REEP, has become a model for nurturing youth leadership in the environmental justice movement. ACE also mobilizes legal and scientific resources in support of organizing strategies and has helped neighborhood groups statewide to block ethanol trains, trash transfer stations, dirty diesel exhaust and asphalt plants. ACE's T Riders Union works for transit justice, including an MBTA Youth Pass. ACE led the advocacy that resulted in the Massachusetts Environmental Protection Executive Order, and has pioneered strategies for environmental justice advocacy that have radically redefined the environmental movement nationwide. For more information: <http://www.ace-ej.org/> Please give generously.

The Social Justice Council - Administration of Monthly Shared Offerings

The Social Justice Council was charged by the Governing Board to administer the monthly shared offerings to worthy and appropriate organizations.

Priorities:

- Local or statewide nonprofit social justice and/or service organizations with whom we have partnerships or seek to develop new relationships.
- UU affiliated social justice organizations (state or national).
- Response to immediate crises (e.g. hurricane relief) - in these cases the Social Justice Council might make a recommendation to the Board for a special collection.

The Social Justice Council will make final decisions on recipients and will solicit suggestions from designated groups in the congregation. Months and groups are as follows for 2017-2018 (October-September):

3 months: Social Justice Task Force nominees

2 months: Transformation Team nominees

1 month: Tuesday Meals nominee

1 month: Religious Education Council or youth nominee

2 months: and Christmas Eve: UU organizations

3 months: Nominees from "Other Programs": To include but not be limited to: Young Adults Group, Women's Sacred Circle, Middle East Education Group, Paine Senior Services, Choir.

Schedule for 2017-18:

October: Beyond Borders/Sin Fronteras nominee: Cambridge Interfaith Sanctuary Coalition

November: Tuesday Meals nominee: Food For Free

December: Religious education nominee;

Christmas Eve: UU Urban Ministry

January: Environmental Justice Task Force nominee

February: Transformation Team nominee

March: Unitarian Universalist Service Committee nominee

April: Transformation Team nominee: (Louis D. Brown Institute?)

May: Greater Boston Interfaith Organization Task Force nominee

June: Other Programs nominee

July: Other Programs nominee

August: Other Programs nominee

Selection process for “Other Program” nominees:

The Social Justice Council will solicit nominations from “Other Programs” for the June, July, and August recipients starting in January.

The Social Justice Council will send a letter to “Other Programs” groups explaining the nomination process. An application will consist of a written summary or link to a website of the group nominated along with the reason that First Parish should support them, including possible future relationship. If a new or other recognized group that is not listed above wishes to be in the list of groups who are invited to nominate a recipient, the group leader should contact the Social Justice Council.

The Social Justice Council will review nominations and select the June, July, and August recipients based on the information provided during the nominating process, and how each organization fits the priorities listed above.

Responsibilities of the nominating group and the monthly recipient:

The nominating group will provide a description of the recipient for a Meetinghouse News (MHN) article and write a shorter description of the group’s work (165 words or less) to go in the announcements. The MHN article is due to the office on the 25th of the month preceding the collection, and the announcement is due the Wednesday before the first Sunday of the month.

The nominating group will also solicit a staff person from the organization to attend a service early in the month and give a short 3-minute spotlight announcement near the beginning of the service. The guest should be encouraged to stay for the service, and is welcome to bring brochures for coffee hour.

Guest at Your Table

Thank you for participating in the UU Service Committee (UUSC) fundraiser over the holiday season. **Please plan to return your Guest at Your Table boxes during worship on Sunday, January 21.**

Guest at Your Table is the UUSC's annual intergenerational program to raise support for and awareness about our work to advance human rights. Since UUSC works in over 25 countries, with over 75 grassroots partners, there are thousands of individuals involved in and who benefit. With our donations to Guest at Your Table, First Parish in Cambridge and congregations around the world help make this important work possible.

Featured this year: Ursula Rakova, Tulele Peisa

The Carteret Islands of Papua New Guinea are among the first communities on earth having to relocate because of climate change. Ursula Rakova founded the non-governmental organization Tulele Peisa, one of UUSC’s seven climate-forced displacement partners in the South Pacific. Tulele Peisa, which means “Sailing in the wind on our own” in the local Halia language, supports Carteret Islanders through all stages of relocation, from the first stages of the move to finding a new home and new employment in Bougainville, the resettlement destination in the Solomon Islands.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Women's Writing Group

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: **January 8** and **January 22**, 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, **January 9** 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

GBLTQ-I Covenant Group

The new Covenant Group for those who identify as GBLTQ-I will meet on **Wednesday, January 10** at 7:00 pm in the Fuller Rm. Subsequent meetings will be on the 1st Wednesday of each month beginning in February. Peggy Kraft will facilitate. If you have questions or are interested in participating, contact Rev. Danielle at 617-876-7772 or devminister@firstparishcambridge.org

Ordination and Installation of Adam Lawrence Dyer - Saturday, January 13 at Noon

A reminder that we will joyously ordain Adam as a Unitarian Universalist minister and then install him as our Lead Minister in a service of Ordination and Installation next Saturday at Noon. A reception will follow in the Barn Room. Everyone is welcome to join in this celebratory occasion. To help us plan the reception, please RSVP to Carol Lewis at office@firstparishcambridge.org by Tuesday, January 9.

Cambridge Forum – January 18 at 7:00 pm

Stories and Literature are much more than entertainment – they shape our world. On Thursday, January 18 at 7 pm Harvard Professor Martin Puchner, leads us on a remarkable journey through time and place to reveal the powerful role that stories have played in creating the world of today. He is General Editor of the *Norton Anthology of World Literature* and teaches a Harvard X online course with students around the globe. Please join us for a fascinating discussion; doors open at 6.30 pm. This Cambridge Forum event is free and open to all. www.cambridgeforum.org

Movie screening and Discussion

Come see the movie *Harvest of Empire* at **noon on Sunday, January 21** in the chapel. Sponsored by the Beyond Borders/ Sin Fronteras social justice group, this award-winning film focuses on the roots of immigration to the United States by people from Central America. Learn about how United States intervention in Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico and El Salvador uprooted millions of people from their homes. See <http://harvestofempiremovie.com/>. Snacks and discussion are included.

Martin Luther King Day – January 15

Cambridge's Annual MLK Day Commemoration and Remembrance

Monday, January 15, 2018 • 11:00 AM

St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 838 Massachusetts Ave., Central Sq., Cambridge

In this time of renewed focus on the challenges of sexism, racism, xenophobia, fear, and threats of violence – and on action for peace, justice, and equality – please join us as we remember and celebrate the life and work of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:

*** 11:00 AM to 12:45 PM:**

Celebration of Dr. King's Life and Work for Peace, Justice, and Transformation

*** 12:45 to 1:45 PM: Lunch and Gathering at the Church**

In 1967, Martin Luther King described what he saw as the most serious challenge for our society. In his words, "We must rapidly begin the shift from a thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights, are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered." More than fifty years later, the United States still faces these three existential challenges to our values as a nation.

The City of Cambridge will honor and remember Dr. King and his legacy, as we gather at St. Peter's Episcopal Church to hear members of the Cambridge community share readings of Dr. King's words calling for peace, justice and transformation, as well as musical performances by Véronique Epiter, Christina DeV Vaughn, and members of Cambridge's Episcopal churches. We will also feature remarks by **Paul Parravano**, Co-Director of the MIT Office of Government and Community Relations.

Since 1991, Paul Parravano has fostered communication and understanding between the Institute and all levels of government, major constituency groups, and MIT's surrounding community. He serves as MIT's campus federal relations officer, accompanying MIT's President on regular visits to Washington and hosting campus visits by elected officials and other dignitaries. In Cambridge, Paul works to strengthen MIT's involvement in science education for K-12 teachers and students through a growing list of partnerships, especially with the Cambridge Public Schools. He represents MIT on the boards of several local nonprofit and civic organizations, including Just-a-Start, the Cambridge Community Center, and the City of Cambridge's Community Benefits Advisory Committee. Paul is a member (and a past chair) of the National Braille Press Board of Trustees, and a past president of the Arlington Housing Corporation. Before coming to MIT, Paul practiced law as an attorney at a civil rights consulting firm in the Boston area, providing advice and consultation on the implementation of civil rights regulations. Originally from Ann Arbor, Michigan, Paul lost his sight at the age of three, and with the support of his parents, he learned braille, excelled in schools (learning Latin, German and French along the way), earned his undergraduate degree from Harvard University and his law degree from Northeastern University.

In addition to the Peace Commission's Commemoration and Remembrance at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, once again **Many Helping Hands** will sponsor volunteer activities for its **Day of Service from 2:00 to 5:00 PM** at City Hall, St. Peter's, the YWCA, the Senior Center and other sites.

More information is available at www.cambridgema.gov/peace and at <http://bit.ly/MLKDayCambridge2018>.

Follow up lobbying for Carbon Pricing

The Environmental Justice Task Force and Unitarians across Massachusetts are working to bring a critical piece of legislation out of committee and to a vote in the MA House and Senate. (If the legislation does not move to floor this spring, it cannot come up again for two years. . . a serious delay) California, several Canadian Provinces and many countries in Europe have carbon fees.

Carbon Pricing is reported to be one of the most effective ways of reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). Those who use the most carbon pay the most; those that use the least will pay less or receive a rebate. Carbon pricing is considered as effective as increasing renewable energy or efficiency as a means of decreasing carbon emissions.

<https://1jf7652uqh8csljrqt8yp9l-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/DOER-Carbon-Pricing-study-4-pager-071415.pdf>

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

UU Mass Action and activists from several local churches are organizing their parishioners to lobby their representatives and senators to co-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. Even if your Representative or Senator has already signed on to these bills, let them know how much you support that they have done so. Please contact either Peggy Lynch, mlynch4@icloud.com or Ginger Ryan, gingerryan11@gmail.com. We can send to you the letter writing or phone call guidelines.

Volunteer this Winter Season at Y2Y

Y2Y, the student run shelter housed in our basement is in need of volunteers for the remainder of winter break (through Tuesday morning, January 23). The signup sheet is [here](#), and feel free to sign up or email volunteer.y2y@gmail.com with any questions! First Parish member and Governing Board Clerk, Grace Hall wrote the following about her experience volunteering at Y2Y:

Two years ago, the Y2Y program began right here at First Parish. The program is flourishing, but there is one hitch. Most of the student volunteers go home for Thanksgiving, the winter break, and spring vacation. During those periods, community volunteers are needed. I have participated during those periods and I would be delighted to see more of us from First Parish joining in. One of the advantages of the Y2Y volunteering is that it is limited

No training is required as there are always trained supervisors working with you (although you are asked to read the handbook on-line prior to coming). During the breakfast and dinner shifts, volunteers cook, serve and clean up. In the evening, there are snacks to prepare and some laundry to do. Overnight volunteers continue with laundry and keep the place in order, but also have opportunity to sleep for several hours.