

# THE MEETINGHOUSE NEWS

*First Parish in Cambridge, Unitarian Universalist*

November 2017

## Reflections from Our Lead Minister, Adam Lawrence Dyer



### Community Care

As we approach the holiday season in November and December, many of us will turn to thoughts of being with family and enjoying gatherings with good food and laughter. At the same time, this is a season that can also be extremely challenging for people. Those who will experience a first holiday without a loved one who has recently died; people in a new place; young families with a new addition whose joy is tempered by trying to figure out how to make ends meet...no two people experience the holiday season the same way. With this spirit in mind we are hoping to begin ramping up more intentional opportunities for our community to receive pastoral care.

Too often, when people hear “pastoral care” they think of something explicitly religious or they think that it must involve someone dying or approaching serious illness. Although pastoral care can provide these kinds of support, it can and must be more expansive in our modern world. Specifically, in our community what we are hoping to do is provide a culture and a functional network of care that intentionally engages the congregation in providing and receiving a wide variety of support from one another. It could be a ride to church or a thoughtful phone call when someone hasn’t been to church in a while, a condolence card or a companion to a challenging medical appointment or just a kind and receptive ear for listening...these are all part of what we would like to call “Community Care”.

As your minister, I am committed to actively providing community care, but I cannot do it alone. Starting on November 5, we will begin taking down names of people who would like to be actively involved in shaping this work as well as additional ideas about the kinds of care that we would like to see in our community. I have already experienced the depth of the caring in this community, that is one reason I am here. I believe the more intentionally we are able to let each other know the depth of this caring, the stronger we can be as a community. Please check out the table with information about Community Care in the Parlor during coffee hour throughout this month.

### Ordination Installation: Update

The Minister’s Welcome Group and I are thrilled to announce that we have agreed upon Saturday, January 13, 2018 as the date for my installation and ordination. This will be an exciting and celebratory time for us to come together as a community and I look forward to sharing it with you all. I am humbled and honored and looking forward to this date when my family and I can celebrate this personal milestone and this historical moment for the church. We will have more details to follow soon, but for now save the date!

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CORNER

Every November, the children have the opportunity to learn more about organizations in our community that we might partner with over the coming year. They will hear more about each group and then have a chance to experience the fifth principle in action. Our fifth principle reminds us to use our conscience and the democratic process, and so this is an opportunity for our children to get informed and to vote for a cause they care about. Once they have chosen, we will learn more deeply about the organization through service projects and visiting guests. The children will have the chance to support them through a fundraiser and will also ask the congregation to support them as one of our monthly Shared Offering recipients. At the end of the year they will reflect and share with us what they have learned about the value of generosity, about being good community partners, and how they are enriched themselves by helping others.



This year our possible Justice Partners are:

### **Rice Sticks and Tea**

Founded in 1998, Ricesticks and Tea (RST) is a food pantry program serving over 120 pre-screened low-income Asian immigrant and refugee families each month. Those 120 households represent over 300 children, adults and seniors. It is the only food pantry program in the region whose mission is to serve the Asian community and provide food that is consistent with their cultural cooking traditions and preferences. Beyond Borders/Sin Fronteras recommended this organization as a new possibility.

### **Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House**

The mission of the Margaret Fuller House is to strengthen and empower youth, families, and community residents. They work to address the economic, social and political inequities that shape the lives and futures of Port/Area IV residents. They have afterschool programs, a **Youth Leadership**

**Development Program**, elder services, and the highest volume food pantry in Cambridge. In the past First Parish youth have helped in the afterschool program and we have run a mitten tree at the holidays to provide gifts for children.

### **Louis D. Brown Peace Institute**

The Louis D. Brown Peace Institute is a center of healing, teaching, and learning for families and communities impacted by murder, trauma, grief, and loss. Their programs and services are grounded in the Center for Disease Control's social-ecological framework that interventions are needed at multiple levels in order to interrupt cycles of violence. The heart of their work is with families impacted by murder on both sides. Their impact extends to community and society through tools, training, and technical assistance. First Parish participates in their Mother's Day Walk for Peace each spring.

### **Heifer International**

Heifer Farm helps rural communities lift themselves out of poverty through farming. At their 270-acre educational farm in Rutland, Massachusetts, visitors come for an experience, engage in activities and leave empowered to make a difference through a variety of tours, overnight programs and events. First Parish children have been to the farm festival to learn about which animals are appropriate for farms in different countries, and have fundraised for an Animal Ark.

Our Spirit Play children will continue to support our own Tuesday Meals program. For over 25 years, the Tuesday Meals Program has offered warm hospitality and an evening meal in a safe, dignified environment to anyone in need of nourishment. Doors open for dinner every Tuesday at 5:30pm! Through partnering in-house with Tuesday Meals, our youngest children learn to care for our own community. In past years, we have enjoyed visits from Chef Pam, created holiday table centerpieces, and baked apple pies, lemon bars and brownies for the guests.

*I look forward to the results of our voting on November 12<sup>th</sup>!*

*In faith,*

*Mandy*

## **Shared Offering in November**

Food for Free will receive half the plate offerings for the month of November. Please give generously!

Food for Free improves access to healthy food within our community by rescuing food that would otherwise go to waste, strengthening the community food system, and creating new distribution channels to reach under-served populations. We envision a future where everyone in our community—regardless of age, income or ability—has consistent access to fresh, healthy, delicious food.

Food for Free's oldest and largest program is Food Rescue and Distribution, which collects food that might otherwise go to waste and distributes it to more than 100 food programs in 11 Greater Boston communities. This program helps to feed more than 30,000 people each year.

Our direct-service programs include Home Delivery, which brings food twice each month to low-income seniors and people with disabilities; Family Meals, which repackages rescued prepared food from university and corporate dining halls, creating heat-and-eat meals for people who face barriers to cooking for themselves; and the Cambridge Weekend Backpack Program, which sends schoolkids at risk for hunger home with healthy, kid-friendly food for the weekend.

Other programs include Field of Greens, which grows vegetables for Pine Street Inn, and the Transportation Partnership, which picks up food from the Greater Boston Food Bank on behalf of local food programs that lack their own transportation.

Food for Free was founded in 1981 and is a 501c3 nonprofit organization.

*The Governing Board has asked the Social Justice Council to coordinate selection of the monthly plate offering this year, and we will be finalizing and publicizing the selection process soon. In the meantime, as in the past, the Tuesday Meals program was asked to nominate a recipient for one of the months, and Food for Free is a wonderful recipient for this fall harvest season!*

## WHAT IS IN STORE FOR THE 2017 FIRST PARISH AUCTION?

By Kathy Watkins



**New events** including Aging Gracefully and Couples Massage workshops.

**Themed gift baskets** and **Crafts to Go!**

**More vacations** than ever, including three new options – Brewster, MA, Old Orchard Beach, ME, and a guest room in Los Angeles, CA.

**Fun dinners** including North Cambridge Progressive Dinner; An Abundance of Small Plates with Lisa Doberteen and Lyn & Art Lidsky; Venetian Dinner with Michael Melford and Dean Traweek; Sunday Brunch by a Wood Stove with Charlene Gararneau and Don Tucker; Mediterranean Dinner with Patrick Sullivan and Louise Delasi; Indian Dinner with Rashid Shaikh and Sharon DeVos; and many more!

**Flat rate events** including Pizza & Game Night; Baked Pasta Dinner; Saturday Brunch; and BBQ. These are sure to be fun evenings with friends at an affordable price.

These are just a few of the fabulous offerings up for bid. Please come by the information table in the parlor after services on **November 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> to get a bidding number**; check out the catalog of items and get ready to bid on dinners, events and vacations during the November 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Auction!

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**. Plan on attending the Auction on November 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> and be sure to bid on items to support the First Parish community and meet new friends!

### KEY DATES FOR 2017 AUCTION:

Obtain a Bidding Number:

November 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>

**Auction:**

**November 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>**

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Email:

[auction@firstparish.org](mailto:auction@firstparish.org)

Website:

[www.firstparishcambridge.org/auction](http://www.firstparishcambridge.org/auction)

Donation Forms:

[www.firstparishcambridge.org/auction](http://www.firstparishcambridge.org/auction)

## Welcome Adam at a Potluck Gathering

Welcoming our new Lead Minister Adam Lawrence Dyer means getting acquainted! We'd like to have all members, and newcomers interested in becoming a part of our community, to do just that with a series of informal gatherings between November and late March. Sunday supper gatherings are scheduled in some member's homes (see schedule below). There will also be at least one hosted event at First Parish to be sure we have accessible space for all interested in coming.

These are opportunities for you to get to know one another in mostly small gatherings of 6 to 10 in a relaxed and congenial atmosphere. Please note that all guests--whether active or inactive members or newcomers—are welcome. Here's how and when to participate:

### Sunday Supper Schedule

Date	Location	Host(s)	No. of Guests
November 4, 2017	Mid-Cambridge	Sylvia Wheeler	10
November 19, 2017	East Cambridge	Devon & Anita Kinkaid	30-40
December 10, 2017	Inman Square	Rashid Shaikh & Sharon deVos	5
December 17, 2017	Somerville	Grace Hall	6
January 7, 2018	Arlington	Jennifer Griffith & Linda Clark	7
January 28, 2018	Watertown	Robin Brown	8-12
February 11, 2018	North Cambridge	Susan Shepherd & Marcia Hams	10
February 25	Somerville	Laura and Allegra Heath-Stout	15
March 11	North Cambridge	Cade Murray & Karin Lin	10
March 25	Harvard Square – First Parish	Volunteer Team	50

**TO BE A GUEST:** Guest sign up sheets for the Sunday Potluck Supper events will be available at Sunday social hours in November and on our [website](https://goo.gl/forms/RvxQLImqrv6SnBlr2) (https://goo.gl/forms/RvxQLImqrv6SnBlr2 ). Please choose one event to attend 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 (spaces are limited so you may be asked to join another location), please choose one that is convenient for you. It's a great way to meet new friends and learn about each other and our First Parish community. Be sure to bring your calendars with you on Sundays!

#### *Welcome Potluck Team*

Rashid Shaikh  
Linda West  
Sylvia Wheeler

## **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](mailto: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 few biweekly Monday night meetings are: Nov. 6 and 20, and Dec. 4 and 18, and run from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Please contact Heidi Meyer, facilitator, at [h.meyer@comcast.net](mailto:h.meyer@comcast.net) for more details; the opportunity to freely explore your writing voice in a supportive, non-critiquing environment, awaits you!!

## **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!

November 1, 6:00 pm: Cambridge (3 Church St., Harvard Square)

November 15, 6:00 pm: Boston (66 Marlborough St., Back Bay)

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

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

<http://thesanctuaryboston.org/>

## First Parish GBIO Task Force Criminal Justice Reform Update

One of the benefits of First Parish's membership in the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (GBIO) is our ability to work with many other organizations and congregations on the formulation and advocacy of a progressive social justice agenda. A major focus of this agenda is criminal justice reform, and in this area there has been real progress.

GBIO's strategy for criminal justice reform identifies and focuses on the following four major issues where changes are needed:

- Pretrial and bail reform
- Mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses
- Excessive fees and fines
- Excessive use of solitary confinement.

Senator William Brownsberger has drafted and introduced in the Massachusetts Senate the omnibus Comprehensive Criminal Justice Bill (S.2185). The bill proposes many important changes to several areas of Massachusetts criminal law. Senator Brownsberger has included all four of GBIO's priority issues in the bill. Overall, their inclusion in the bill is a major achievement for GBIO, and we can be very proud of our success.

However, the mandatory minimum provisions in the bill are disappointing. They do not constitute a full repeal of mandatory minimum sentencing for drug offenses. As proposed, the law still contains mandatory minimum sentences for low-level amounts of substances. Without repeal of mandatory minimums for all low level weights of drug substances, people who are "users" or addicts can still get caught up in the mandatory minimum drug trafficking scenario. The mandatory minimum drug laws need to be clearer on defining who is a ruthless kingpin and who is selling drugs to help support an addiction.

Despite the problems with the mandatory minimum provisions, the GBIO strategy team is recommending that we support Senator Brownsberger's bill because it does include GBIO's four reform issues and many other needed reforms. At the same time, we want to continue to support full repeal for mandatory minimum drug sentences.

The First Parish GBIO Task Force is hosting a workshop on criminal justice reform in Massachusetts on **November 19<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm** in the Barn Room. This is a great opportunity to hear more about the proposed reforms and what we can do to support the reform effort. Lunch will be available at 12:30 – come join us after you finish bidding at the church auction!

## **“Welcoming”**

-- a retreat workshop led by the First Parish GBIO (Greater Boston Interfaith Org.) Task Force

On September 24, 2017, our new minister Adam Lawrence Dyer gave a sermon about “welcoming”. He asked a provocative question: How can newcomers to our church community feel welcome?

At the annual retreat on Saturday, October 24 the GBIO Task Force hosted a workshop on this subject too. We had planned it months before, so this was a wonderful coincidence and gave participants a chance to explore these ideas together. We want to share suggestions that emerged in reflecting on two types of situations. The first is as a stranger how did you feel walking into a room of strangers and what made you feel welcome? The second is what overtures did you or others take that made strangers/newcomers feel welcome?

Suggestions for how First Parish, as individuals and as a community, can create this atmosphere and culture of welcoming and caring include:

- Introduce oneself with your first name and say hi.
- Introduce strangers/newcomers to others nearby (especially during social hour) and invite them to join your conversation.
- Older adults seek out young adults and begin a conversation (the young adult will feel seen”).
- Provide a sacred space during times of crises (such as 9/11).
- Find something quickly that both can relate to.
- For introverts, happy to have the other person do most of the initiating and talking.
- Have a “buddy bench” in social hour where someone can sit if that person wants to chat with someone else
- Use a colored cup to identify newcomers at social hour
- Have greeters stand at the Mass Ave exit after service to say good-bye and thank people for coming.
- Use more rooms than the crowded Parlor for social hour so that people can be in smaller groups; have seats to chat informally and not have to stand; and have less noise.

These are great ideas for us to consider over time, and some we can try out the next time we are at coffee hour!. Thanks to all of the workshop participants for a frank, open, and creative session.

## Impact

Paine Senior Services - Elizabeth Aguilo, LICSW

It is that time of year when I start looking back on the year to evaluate Paine's impact. Usually I look at our clients as a whole. I also focus on one particular client situation which exemplifies the work we do to help seniors live in the community and with as much dignity and choice as their circumstances allow. This review usually impacts me in two ways—it makes me proud of the role that we play in helping people make profoundly personal decisions and it humbles me.

While I continue to look at our work with individuals as an agency, I am also reviewing the impact this tiny little agency has on the broader community—not because of the role that we alone play, but because we work together with others in community to widen our impact and influence.

CHNA 17 is a coalition of 6 towns including Cambridge. More information about this coalition can be found on [www.chna17.org](http://www.chna17.org). With funding from Mt. Auburn and McLean's hospitals, the coalition is currently involved in a project to address racial equity and mental health services. The assessment phase has been completed and the report on the findings from interviews with individual residents and providers will be available on the website. The next phase will include conducting community dialogues both with residents and with providers in all 6 towns.

Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services (SCES) is the state-funded homecare agency that provides home-based services to seniors in Cambridge and Somerville. These services enable frail seniors to age in their homes with dignity. The Executive Director of SCES, John O'Neill, is retiring after 38 years of service. With the changing political climate and the consequent impact on people young and old who depend on services, hiring a new Executive Director has been an important task—one that affects 3,000 seniors in Somerville and Cambridge. As the President of the Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services Board, PSS ED, Liz Aguilo, chaired the Search Committee that found SCES' s new Executive Director, Paul Hollings, who will begin in November.

In January 2017, the Cambridge City Council was presented with the Cambridge Needs Assessment. The intent behind this report was to inform the City Council so that Community Benefits Funding may be used to address the city's needs. The full report can be found at: <http://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/Projects/Planning/cambridgeneedsassessment>

A Community Benefits Advisory Committee was appointed by the City Manager. This Advisory Committee will engage in a process on how to act on the funding priorities determined by City Council. PSS ED, Liz Aguilo, was appointed to the Advisory Committee and has begun the work of collaborating with the city, residents, and other non-profit directors to develop such a process.

In addition to the specific activities listed above, PSS continues to participate in the Cambridge Elder Abuse Prevention Coalition, participating in an event in June to increase awareness of elder abuse.

Of course, our focus remains to help individual elders know their choices and make decisions that make the most sense for them.

If you would like to support our work and make a difference in our Cambridge community, please contact Executive Director, Liz Aguilo, 617-864-2580. Also, please consider a donation to Paine Senior Services, 3 Church St., Cambridge, MA, 02138

## **Medicare Update 2018**

### **Open enrollment October 15<sup>th</sup> through December 7<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Medicare Plan Finder (Medicare.gov)**

This is the website utilized by consumers and SHINE counselors to compare health and prescription drug plan costs and coverage. Although the plans are required to update this information by October 15<sup>th</sup> I always recommend double checking the information directly with the plan.

**Federal Employee Open Enrollment:** November 14<sup>th</sup> – December 9<sup>th</sup>

**Health Connector Open Enrollment:** November 1<sup>st</sup> – January 23<sup>rd</sup>

#### **NEW MEDICARE CARDS**

- New Medicare cards will be mailed to beneficiaries from April 2018 – April 2019
- If you have not updated your address with Social Security please do so as soon as possible
- People should beware of anyone who contacts them about new cards – Medicare will not call nor ask for personal information for getting new cards

#### **Medicare Part D (Prescription Drug Coverage)**

<b>Standard Coverage Levels</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
Deductible	\$400	\$405
Initial Coverage Limit*	\$3,700	\$3,750
Out-of-Pocket Threshold	\$4,950*	\$5,000*
Catastrophic Cost-Sharing	\$3.30/\$8.25 or 5%	\$3.35/\$8.35 or 5%

\*In 2018, after \$3,750 in retail costs, beneficiary pays 35% of brand name drug costs and 44% of generic drug costs until total out-of-pocket costs equal \$5,000 (including brand name discount in gap).

The number of plans offered in 2017 has increased from last year from 21 to 22. No sanctions or suppressed plans have been reported at this time.

The following Medicare Part D plan will be **discontinued** 12/31/17:

First Health Part D Premier Plus, current members will be auto-assigned to First Health Part D Value Plus. If you are a member of this plan please double check your coverage. There are no guarantees that the coverage will be the same as your original plan.

**Terminated Plans:** None

**New Plans:** Aetna and Express Scripts each added a new plan

**Sanctioned Plans:** None

#### **Things to consider in a Part D plan**

We recommend you check your coverage every year.

- Are all my medications still on the formulary (the list of covered medications)?
- Have restrictions been added or changed? There are 3 types of restrictions: Quantity Limits, Prior Authorization, and Step Therapy.
- Many Part D plans offer preferred cost sharing at select pharmacies. Please be aware that costs can still vary between pharmacies.

### **Need help decreasing prescription drug costs?**

Consider applying for **Prescription Advantage**, the Commonwealth of MA Pharmacy Assistance Program. There are no asset limits and benefits are based on your income. Some of the benefits include:

- Works with Extra Help
- Decreases costs in the coverage gap
- Provides one special enrollment period. This means you would be able to change your prescription drug plan once during the benefit year.

***You can now apply for Prescription Advantage online.***

***Go to: [www.prescriptionadvantagemma.org](http://www.prescriptionadvantagemma.org)***

Apply for **Extra Help with Prescription Drug Cost** by going to **ssa.gov** and see if you qualify for this subsidy. There are different levels of coverage and depending on your resources you could get assistance paying for your prescription drug plan premium and deductibles. Your co-pays could be lowered and you would be able to change your prescription drug plan throughout the benefit year.

### **Medicare Advantage Plans**

***Please note that I have focused on information for Middlesex County. If you live in another county please contact the MA Plan directly.***

### **New Medicare Advantage Plans:**

**Aetna: 1-800-338-7027** (call to see if your providers are contracted with this plan)

- Medicare Value Plan HMO \$0 monthly premium
- Medicare Freedom Plan PPO \$35 monthly premium
- Medication gap coverage for Tiers 1 & 2
- You can travel up to 12 months and stay on these plans

### Blue Cross Blue Shield Changes:

- Three HMOs and two PPOs monthly premium decreased by \$3.00
- Preferred Pharmacies

### Tufts Medicare Preferred Changes:

- Monthly premium increases
- HMO Saver Rx with \$0 monthly premium: Out of pocket maximum increased to \$4,500 and Part B meds 20% co-pay
- Drug deductibles increased for those plans with drug coverage

### United Healthcare Changes:

- Passport Program: can be up to 9 months out of the service area and remain in the plan: have to call customer service to activate/deactivate
- Small premium increases

There are also changes in Fallon, but it is not as widely used in Cambridge.

Harvard Pilgrim is now offering MA plans in Middlesex County, but does not have a lot of contracts in the Cambridge area. Those interested should go to Harvard Pilgrim's website to learn more.

Things to think about before enrolling in a Medicare Advantage (MA) plan:

- Check if doctors take plan and if drugs are covered
- Compare premiums, co-pays, deductibles, and annual out-of-pocket maximums
- Cannot enroll in an MA plan (HMO, PPO) and a stand-alone prescription drug plan (PDP) at the same time. Selection of a PDP will result in being disenrolled from the MA plan
- New MA enrollment will result in automatic disenrollment from prior MA or PDP plan

**Special Enrollment Periods (SEP) after December 7th:**

- Prescription Advantage members get one SEP during the calendar year
- Extra Help beneficiaries and dual-eligible (have both Medicare & Masshealth) have continuous SEP. Change happens on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the following month
- Loss of Extra Help on 1/1/18 – SEP until March 31, 2018
- 5 Star Plan SEP
- Medicare Advantage Disenrollment Period Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> – Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>. You can switch from MA back to Medicare and PDP, but not pick up another MA plan unless it is a 5 Star Plan

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