**THE MEETINGHOUSE NEWS**

**First Parish in Cambridge, Unitarian Universalist**

**October 2017**

**Reflections from Our Lead Minister, Adam Lawrence Dyer**

**Hello October!**

We are off to a great year of worship! Thank you all for your enthusiasm and participation. The Worship Planning Team has been exploring many different ways to assure that our important time together on Sundays is enjoyable and enlightening. We are also working hard to make sure that Sunday is an intentional time of gathering and sharing. A big part of the

way in which we are doing this is by working with monthly themes. Below is a list of the themes we are hoping to share over the coming months:

**September -** Welcoming

**October** - Knowing: What are the different ways in which we know each other and share

relationships?

**November** - Knowing: How do we know ourselves?

**December** – Holding: In what ways are we embraced/held in love by our many different

 families?

**January** – Growing: Who do we aspire to be?

**February** – Growing: Who do we want to be with?

**March** – Transforming: What are our miracles and how do we embrace the inexplicable.

**April** - Transformation: What does it mean to be human and imperfect in a scientific world?

**May** - Letting and Letting Go: Transitions/bridging/graduating

**June** – August: Celebrating (General Assembly, Renewal, Preparing)

Another way in which we are hoping to more deeply engage the community in the Sunday

experience is by inviting your direct participation. Each Sunday, we would love to welcome

more voices from the congregation to participate by offering chalice lighting words, providing a

reading or leading the congregation in our covenant. If you are interested in contributing as a

Sunday Worship Associate, please feel free to speak with Will Williamson on Sunday morning or

by email (fpcmem@gmail.com) for more information.

Finally, I want to personally thank you all for your energy and support as we begin this journey

together. I have been overwhelmed by the love and welcoming from each of you as we get to

know each other and share spiritual growth together. I am hoping in November to provide

specific times when we can sit down and talk one on one and also where we can gather as a

group to share ideas and where I can get your feedback. Peace and love to you all!

ALD

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CORNER**

This month’s newsletter article didn’t come easily to me. September was busy with the rush of returning faces and new ones, training teachers and arranging and re-arranging our spaces for RE. It left me little time to think about a column. And in the midst of all that, our new minister landed. How wonderful and exciting! And, I also have to acknowledge, it throws us into a challenge - liminal time, the time at the threshold. We are on that border between things, getting a taste of what’s to come but not seeing the full shape of the future. I have entered October, the month of Knowing, in a profound state of unknowing.

There is tremendous potential in this moment.

Being in this time feels unsettling, as if we are on shifting ground. Our community is changing as new people arrive, people long gone return, and other people leave us. This new community has a new vision to cast together. With this potential comes a lot of energy – what could be unfocused energy. Our task together will be to focus that energy on building new relationships, on getting to know each other.

So what are our tools for getting to know each other?

One is active listening. I was reminded of how good it feels to really be listened to this past month. I am taking a Spiritual Direction Practicum through Still Harbor, and at our first meeting, we had many opportunities to listen deeply. We practiced the art of really paying attention, and then of reflecting what someone says without laying judgement or giving advice. We have opportunities to listen deeply in small group ministry, Religious Education groups, and Greater Boston Interfaith Organizing one-on-one meetings.

Another tool is experiments in worship. Each week your staff is spending time crafting worship together, and finding ways to engage more and more voices in worship. Of course we are inspired by our new minister’s presence to try new adventurous things. As a community, we can give ourselves permission to stretch with these experiments – trying out new things, reflecting to learn lessons, and growing.

A final tool in our toolbox is having fun together! Laughter and common experiences are some of the best ways to bond. An intentional part of OWL Sexuality Education is the icebreaker games our youth play at the beginning of each session. These activities give the whole group common, positive experiences to build on. As they get to know each other, they can begin to have the important and more profound conversations that happen during OWL. But don’t let our youth be the only ones having fun! Our Ferry Beach retreat will be a good time to relax together and get closer with old and new friends.

So join me in this opportunity for new discoveries. Let’s be patient with each other as we navigate the threshold. We’ll have some uncomfortable growing pains as we build new relationships, sure, but we will emerge like a butterfly in a whole new way.

In faith,

Mandy

*For a deeper dive into theories of change, you can take a look at this webinar from our New England UUA:* ***Leading -and Feeling- Change*** *led by Hilary Allen (*[*Webinar Recording*](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001wX57sdA72zMR-vpZXZnfNRn1nF_EqcVDi24HLij4qVkAkbEXhY2uX5HjTEBi3gNHBP8JoIyKc9D6zQ16jmbaeh3AYAbEPlEnL4m3yIc8ReXHXJESrDZ7MkwQcWGvKRIpMtEcRPzhKgXiY3HjYtr0TsjWIJLQ52Xzuuynd8BBjUMcnTmJeOp5-A==&c=UJPIX5DHx2FG5zeAk1_UxE1FO4ieCH2wifhy1xIciS2G6dMwhv5-CQ==&ch=_ysCxtSwsCu2AZWPY72L6_RPsRLqcNptmm8FKJ9X6QmQOGb0GTVDEg==) *(1 hr, 25 min),* [*Slides (PDF)*](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001wX57sdA72zMR-vpZXZnfNRn1nF_EqcVDi24HLij4qVkAkbEXhY2uX1BeGcl3qYedT3aKgruafC7SZBDtSGIl1PUOB3_LwE8qGg1kHQUiDtaS7VgfhJ_uv6J33-eHYBrf_v1cgFAH9klrtR8ILmPZMEoqEqKypleeqeZ23nZLxdKAy9rV5Dip0aXIlFfG-EY9xBZSz4EmoaG3NskIyis0U8m14NrRjM8w&c=UJPIX5DHx2FG5zeAk1_UxE1FO4ieCH2wifhy1xIciS2G6dMwhv5-CQ==&ch=_ysCxtSwsCu2AZWPY72L6_RPsRLqcNptmm8FKJ9X6QmQOGb0GTVDEg==)*,* [*Presenter Notes (PDF)*](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001wX57sdA72zMR-vpZXZnfNRn1nF_EqcVDi24HLij4qVkAkbEXhY2uX1BeGcl3qYedGSQSBXtywH86DchNKvrnXWbww65aS9CFk-9FIiSzrLRXdCWzaY-2zj6g2T51Lr2CIMt5cOCYaPGqAlkxrvGRrGXYHN1IitC4_MTA2Uy9FssFv4jc5Djosx0WXKsiQpXAu5bKybH7yT18ei5TE8rkfMTM6nih9V6w&c=UJPIX5DHx2FG5zeAk1_UxE1FO4ieCH2wifhy1xIciS2G6dMwhv5-CQ==&ch=_ysCxtSwsCu2AZWPY72L6_RPsRLqcNptmm8FKJ9X6QmQOGb0GTVDEg==)*)*

**GBIO Task Force News**

First Parish members and friends are invited to several upcoming events:

**October 11**GBIO Task Force Meeting

7:00 pm to 9:00 pm in the Landing Room

**October 22** "Out of Many, One": learn more about the life and experiences of Muslims.

2:00 pm to 4:00 pm at Temple Beth Zion, Brookline. Advanced registration is necessary.

**October 30** GBIO Delegates Assembly

7:00 pm to 9:00 pm. Location to be determined.

Looking for people who want to be educated about the latest status of GBIO's criminal justice, affordable housing, and health care campaigns.

**November 10-12** 3-day training in Boston (short walk from South Station) on GBIO techniques, strategies, approaches using lectures, discussions, and interactive exercises. $90 to cover costs of food. Limited scholarship funds available from the First Parish GBIO Task Force.

Please contact either Elizabeth Kline (elizkline@gmail.com) or Marcia Hams (marciahams@gmail.com) if interested to get more information and registration forms.

**Journey with Immigrants in our Community**

Join Beyond Borders/Sin Fronteras at  the all-church retreat (October 13-15 at Ferry Beach) as we play another rousing round of the immigration game provided by our friends at MIRA, the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition. Enjoy time with your friends while learning how our immigration system works (and doesn’t work). We look forward to seeing you there!

We continue  to be active in the Cambridge Interfaith Sanctuary Coalition (CISC). CISC is currently researching options for providing financial support to several organizers who have been dedicating much time and energy to this work. To learn more about our sanctuary efforts and our guests, listen to the piece done by WGBH in July: [http://news.wgbh.org/2017/07/25/how-we-live/ecuadorian-family-finds-refuge-](http://news.wgbh.org/2017/07/25/how-we-live/ecuadorian-family-finds-refuge-cambridge-church-fights-stay-us)

[Cambridge-church-fights-stay-us](http://news.wgbh.org/2017/07/25/how-we-live/ecuadorian-family-finds-refuge-cambridge-church-fights-stay-us).

Contact Rebecca Balder at BBSF@firstparishcambridge.org to get involved with Beyond Borders/Sin Fronteras.

**Auction Update**

By Kathy Watkins

The Auction Committee has been hard at work planning and organizing, but ***we need your help*** to make this event a success for First Parish. The Auction raises critical funds for the operating budget and donates 25% of the event proceeds to the Tuesday Meals Program. But ***more importantly,*** 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. Last year’s events took participants and their taste buds all around the world from Morocco to the Caribbean to India to Provence to Syria and back to North Cambridge and Somerville!

**What Does the Auction Support?**

**Let’s Get Excited About Maintenance!** The Auction supports the operating budget of First Parish. And while folks don’t often get very excited about maintenance activities and operating budgets (until something breaks), they are critical to the functioning of an organization. For example, we need a clean building, with heat, a roof and working lights to support Sunday worship and committee meetings. Our beautiful and historic building is a critical foundation for the community we are striving for at First Parish and in need of our continued support.

**Tuesday Meals Program** is a great program and the Auction helps support their mission of serving hot healthy meals to our homeless and hungry neighbors by donating 25% of the Auction proceeds. I have volunteered serving food and seen the loving kindness that is a core mission of the Program. Tuesday evenings are about more than just hot and healthy meals. Volunteers talk with the customers, welcome them in to the church building and provide a few hours of respite in what can be an otherwise hectic and sometimes unfriendly world. Our continued support of this program is a commitment to the broader community of Harvard Square.

**How Can You Help?**

**Donations:** Please consider supporting the Auction by organizing a meal for 6 or 8 or more guests with friends; donating a week in your vacation home; donating themed gift baskets or gift cards from your favorite local restaurant or store; or donating homemade crafts for the ***gifts to go*** table. Be creative, have some fun and meet new people.

**Participate in the Auction:** Bid on items November 12th and 19th. Join a dinner or flat-rate event to share food and meet new friends within the First Parish community.

**Key Dates for 2017 Auction:**

Tables at Social Hour to Accept Donations: Through October 29th

Donations Due: October 25th (Wednesday)

Auction: November 12th and 19th

**Contact Information:**

Email: auction@firstparish.org

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

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

**Women’s Sacred Circle**

Women interested in joining the First Parish Women's Sacred Circle spiritual practice group are warmly welcomed to the annual Open Circle on Saturday, October 7th. Join us in the Nursery/Barn Room at 7:30 pm.

The Women's Sacred Circle provides a safe, sacred space for women to explore their connection to earth-centered and feminine spirituality and to each other. This year we are exploring a theme of pathways and tools in our spirituality. We open to accept new members *only* once a year & then meet monthly as a closed group thereafter. Circles are held on the 1st Saturdays of each month, Oct. – June.  In order to foster a deep sense of trust and community, we ask that members returning in Nov. make a commitment to attend for the whole year. Please contact Eileen Maher at emaher2011@gmail.com if you are interested in attending the October circle.

**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!

October 4, 6:00 pm: Cambridge (3 Church St., Harvard Square)

October 18, 6:00 pm:  Boston (66 Marlborough St., Back Bay)

November 1, 6:00 pm: Cambridge

November 15, 6:00 pm: Boston

December 6, 6:00 pm: Cambridge

December 20, 6:00 pm: Boston

<http://thesanctuaryboston.org/>

**New England Conservatory’s Contemporary Improvisation Department Presents "The City is Burning,"**

**A new oratorio by Linda J. Chase**

**October 29 at 4:00 pm, Brown Hall at New England Conservatory.**

At 4:00 pm on Sunday, October 29, 2017, New England Conservatory’s Contemporary Improvisation Department will present “The City is Burning, a multi-media oratorio by composer Linda J. Chase.  As described by the composer, the piece draws on sacred texts and poetry in order to “inspire the hope and courage needed to speak out against destructive behaviors and rekindle a compassionate connection to all beings on the earth.” Commissioned in 2016 when Chase served as composer in residence at Old Cambridge Baptist Church, this production will feature vocalist Stan Strickland, vocalist and NEC CI faculty member Nedelka Prescod, Harvard Divinity School emeritus professor Rev. Dr. Harvey Cox, and an eighteen-voice chorus, and an instrumental chamber ensemble under the direction of Contemporary Improvisation Department co-chair Eden MacAdam-Somer.

In her original notes about the piece Chase wrote the following:  “The soundscape of the 21st century is dominated by fragmentation, noise and distractions from a constant barrage of interruptions where our capacity to hear and respond to the earth’s expressions and the voice of the Spirit is being eroded. The City is Burning musically explores critical challenges of our time and reflects on what it means to listen to the inner voice, the quiet truth of the soul, recognizing that feelings of uneasiness might be an awakening from inaction to a place of active hope.  Significant inspiration for this piece came from theologian Harvey G. Cox who led me to ponder the concept of a spiritual “shaking up,” the idea that what can be understood as the Spirit, God, or the inner voice might be a call to action. My other main inspiration came from Buddhist eco-philosopher Joanna Macy, who has observed that “if we are afraid to feel the grief, rage and fear about our world we become stuck, but can begin with gratefulness and move towards an active hope.”

The performance will take place in Brown Hall at New England Conservatory, [290 Huntington Ave](https://maps.google.com/?q=290+Huntington+Ave&entry=gmail&source=g). in Boston.  Admission is free.