

Next issue deadline  
Sunday, December 25

# The Spire

DECEMBER 4, 2022

THE FIRST SUNDAY RECORD

VOL. 65, No. 4

First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Arlington, 630 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, MA 02476 • Gathered 1733

## Christmas Eve

Two services will be held in person in our Sanctuary, both also available via Zoom. They will each last about an hour and begin at 4 pm and 6 pm.

## Embrace the Darkness

On Friday, December 9, we gather at 7 pm for a contemplative service that acknowledges our losses and concerns as well as our hopes and consolations. Available both incarnate and on-line, we will engage with poetry, music, prayer, and candles. Visit the church website for the Zoom link, at [www.firstparish.info](http://www.firstparish.info).



children and adults, and offer opportunities to connect with others through spiritual inquiry and social justice initiatives.

## Outreach

Our message is, "Come!" Come on in and explore this wonderful and wonderfully imperfect group of folks from many generations and walks of life.

Drop into a Spirit Talks conversation to find out what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist. Attend a service or sing with the choir. Join us for services that embrace joyous celebration or offer quiet contemplation. Bring your children to an RE class or check out our Youth Group.

## We Are All First Parish

Each program year the Parish Committee (ParCom) identifies priorities that emerge from discussions at our fall retreat. For 2022-23 these are our priorities:

- Outreach
- Engaging Volunteers
- Stewardship

Each aligns with the theme "We are All First Parish," meaning that everyone is a part of making this community vibrant, fulfilling, and self-sustaining. Although ParCom serves as the governing board, it is the strength of our people that makes this community special. Volunteers keep the lights on, run the numbers for the budget, moderate the on-line Connection Board, make in-person and online worship happen, provide religious education for

We believe we have something special to share with the Arlington community and beyond, and will be looking at ways to invite others in.

## Engaging Volunteers

Volunteers are the lifeblood of First Parish; giving of our time and talent is how many of us have deepened our connection to this community. ParCom recognizes the myriad changes that the Covid pandemic has brought to our routines, our ability to commit to long-term service, and the plain and simple fatigue that affects many of us.

Like other congregations, ours is experiencing a decrease in the number of volunteers. In many committees, leaders and members will be cycling off at the end of the program year. ParCom is thinking about new ways to engage volunteers and create different ways to contribute, recognizing that a variety of options are needed.

## Stewardship

Stewardship means taking care of something. By participating in Stewardship, we are taking care of our spiritual home, including the space itself – both the building and the systems required to keep it running – and also the staff who go above and beyond, and the ministers who offer us spiritual guidance.

All of this work requires funding, and First Parish congregants are generous. We give on Sundays when the plate is passed around and via our phones texting our financial gifts, and, most importantly, we pledge. Pledges typically happen in the early spring. Thinking ahead is of utmost importance this year as we re-commit to taking care of our congregation.

Throughout the program year, subcommittees of ParCom members will focus on these three priorities. We will coordinate with others to reach out to the community, expand opportunities to engage in big and little ways, and support successful Stewardship to sustain our spiritual home.

If you are interested in learning more about the Parish Committee and our priorities, or want to become involved, talk to one of us at Coffee Hour. We are Sara Galantowicz, Anne Quaadgras, Carolyn Hodges, Tom Estabrook, Jeff Keffer, Steve McMullin, Marie Meteer, Allan Tosti, and Celia Wcislo.

You can reach us at [parcom-members@firstparish.info](mailto:parcom-members@firstparish.info).

— Joanna Pushee  
Parish Committee Clerk

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## Giving First Nominations

Each Sunday we donate half of our non-pledge offering to an organization that is making a difference in the world. If you know of a worthy group, please consider nominating them to be a Giving First recipient in 2023.

To do so, visit our church website at [www.firstparish.info/social-justice/giving-first/](http://www.firstparish.info/social-justice/giving-first/)

The Social Justice Committee oversees this program and will accept nominations until January 8. Please note that if you submitted a nomination earlier this year, you will have to submit it again.

If you have any questions about our Giving First program, please contact [givingfirst@firstparish.info](mailto:givingfirst@firstparish.info).



## Tea with the Music Director

Do you have trouble getting to church on time?  
Do you need a little extra caffeine in the morning?  
If you answered yes to one or both of these questions, then join Director of Music Jonathan Colby and members of the Music Committee for tea and biscuits on Sunday, December 11 at 9:15 am in the Parlor. Drop in to say hello and chat. There will be no need to watch the clock – Jonathan will make sure you're in the Sanctuary on time for the Prelude.

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## Net Zero and You

On October 23 First Parish's Climate Action Working Group held "Net Zero and You," a program about how we can move to net-zero carbon use in our homes and our travels.

Sandra Frawley explained that net zero is the goal of stabilizing the Earth's climate by ending greenhouse-gas emissions. A Net Zero agenda includes generating electricity entirely from low-carbon sources; using this electricity efficiently to eliminate fossil fuels from buildings, transportation, and manufacturing; and capturing the remaining greenhouse gases.

We identified many resources that people can use to go electric, such as consultants, subsidies, tax incentives, energy-assessment programs, and rebates. You can find all this information on our church website at [firstparish.info/climate](http://firstparish.info/climate).

Adam MacNeil talked about legislation passed by the State of Massachusetts to build wind farms and create incentives for residents of the state to electrify.

Sanjay Newton and Lori Kenschaft, members of our congregation, discussed plans underway by the town of Arlington to move to net zero by 2050. Both are trained volunteer coaches for the Electrify Arlington

program. They are available to talk with anyone who is interested about installing heat pumps to heat and cool their homes, related technologies, and financial incentives for electrification from the Mass Save Program.

Other members of First Parish also spoke. Andrea Winslow talked about her experience installing heat pumps and an induction stove in her home, and Anne Goodwin described her solar panels and heat pumps, and her purchase of an electric car. Bill Gardiner noted that First Parish leaders are exploring options for moving our heating and cooling systems to net zero in the meetinghouse.

— Bill Gardiner  
Climate Action Working Group



## Committees, Take a Bow!

Over the next several months First Parish standing committees will each broadcast a bit about themselves through an announcement during a service, an information table at coffee hour, an e-mail on the First Parish Connection Board, and an article in *The Spire*.

This effort, led by the Leadership Development Committee (LDC), recognizes that during the pandemic the work of committees, and the people doing that work, became

much less visible. As our community has grown and so much has happened “off-stage,” now is a great time to remind ourselves that there are no magical beings making things happen at First Parish. Our community thrives through our own dedication. To paraphrase Walt Kelly, paraphrasing Oliver Hazard Perry, “We have met the forces for good, and it is us.”

To kick things off, meet the LDC!

### Leadership Development Committee

We gather monthly in members' homes over wine, chocolate, cheese, and other goodies. Our work has three main components:

- hosting leadership-development events for lay leadership, including fall and spring roundtables (complete with a free lunch)
- connecting with members to learn their interests and refer them to volunteer opportunities
- nominating members for election to standing committees at the annual meeting

We are always eager to talk to community members about themselves. This helps us connect them to the most meaningful opportunities for them to contribute to the community.

If you would like to join us, we seek members who are extroverted, or who can at least feign extroversion on a regular basis! Prospective members should be familiar with First Parish and its volunteer opportunities, and understand the rewards of serving as a volunteer.

To speak with an LDC member about volunteering, or about the possibility of joining our committee, please contact us at [leadership@firstparish.info](mailto:leadership@firstparish.info).

— Helene Newberg  
Leadership Development Committee

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## Art in the Parlor

Over 12 years ago Deb Lewis, Carol and John Chamberlain, and Pat Magee began to string fishing line in the Parlor to hang art created by First Parish artists. Since then we have enjoyed the creativity of over 30 shows by photographers, quilters, painters, and sculptors. Artists with individual shows have included Nancy Crasco, Patty Crotty, Kendall Dudley, Larry Osgood, and Peter Southwick. Each show was hung by Carol and John Chamberlain.

This winter Deb Lewis, who has helped present the work of so many others, will share her watercolors. Deb has been painting for many years, depicting children at play in Menotomy Rocks Park, her family pets, and landscapes.

In addition to these shows of an individual's artwork, each year we have a congregational show for which everyone can submit two pieces. We have enjoyed wonderful drawings and photographs created by our children and youth. Many people who have never shown their work submit their efforts. It is a wonderful way to share yourself and what you care about with others at First Parish.

We will have an all-congregational show this spring. Think about what you might share.

— Peggy Gardiner  
Art Exhibition Committee



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## The Spire

Diane Shriver, Editor

Next issue: Sunday, January 1  
Submissions due by Sunday, December 25  
*Items may be edited for space and clarity.*

E-mail to *spire@firstparish.info*.  
If you do not have e-mail, contact the office.

*The Spire* generally deals with the big picture.  
Time-sensitive details belong in the Weekly E-mail  
Bulletin – send to *weekly@firstparish.info*  
by Wednesday at noon.

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