

Next issue deadline
Sunday, February 25

The Spire

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THE FIRST SUNDAY RECORD

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

Living our Values through Participation

How glad we are to be grounded in our spiritual community during these uncertain times. Many of us consider First Parish a “third space” – not home, not work, but a third space of connection where we feel we belong to a community bigger than ourselves. In our “third space,” the more we participate, the more we benefit. And we First Parish members certainly do participate! Involvement in our wide array of programming is astounding.

We show up. Worship attendance has increased 12 percent since last year, with 12 new members joining since June. In November, 60 of us participated in the multigenerational post-election gathering, finding solace in one another as we grappled with the results.

We connect. Over 80 of us form deeper connections through Covenant Groups. Last year, 470 of us participated in our 18 STAR programs, from knitting circles to the *Join or Die* documentary viewing. Our regular potluck dinners feed our souls with an average of 50 people per gathering.

We nurture. Each term, 48 people give their time and energy to work with our youth as Religious Education teachers, teen mentors, or Youth Group advisors. Our rich music program nurtures our spirits, and our choir has grown 15 percent since last year.

We grow spiritually. Each week, some 50 members engage in the spiritual practice of Lectio Divina, and about 25 sit together in sharing and quiet reflection during Wednesday Evening Chapel.

We live our values. Some 30 active volunteers with the ArCS Cluster of Refugee Immigration Ministry currently support six refugee households. Since last March, the group’s short-term hosting program has provided 130 nights of housing, keeping families off

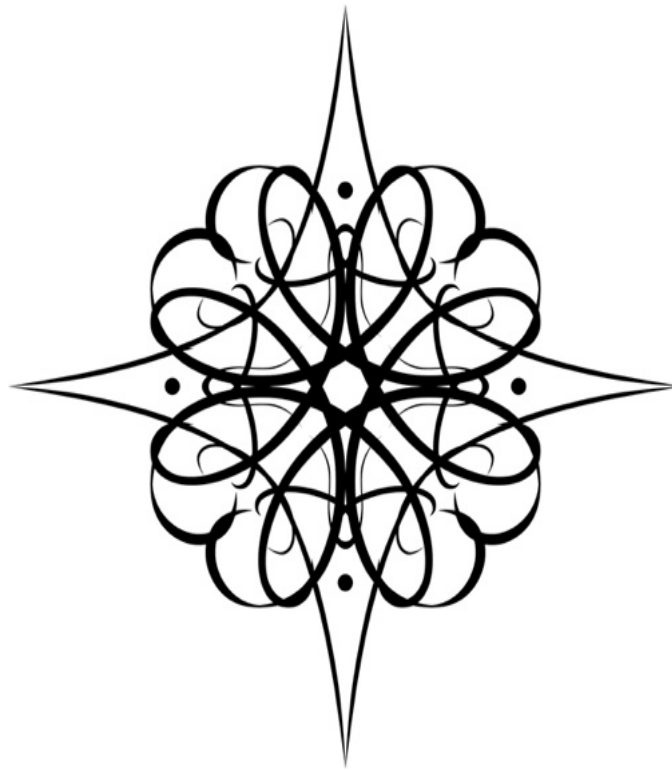
the street. And over 100 people attended three Reckoning and Repair listening sessions to explore passing a congregational affirmation committed to righting past wrongs.

Moving forward hand in hand, we form deeper connections and collectively reflect on our values and commitment to First Parish. As a voluntary community, we depend on contributions of not only time and talent, but also treasure. To remain strong, it is important that we all contribute what we can.

As Stewardship season approaches, please consider what you are able to contribute to our Stewardship Campaign, coming in March, the proceeds of which fund 75 percent of First Parish’s budget.

Participation is an issue of integrity – to acknowledge that you belong to something bigger than yourself. Just as we participate in First Parish programs, every one of us has a responsibility to participate in the financial well-being of our congregation. For we are all stewards of First Parish.

The Stewardship Committee:
Joel Carlton-Gysan, Jessica Farman,
Amy Speare, Maryglenn Vincens



STAR Open House

The STAR adult-education committee invites you to drop by the church for a quiet evening. You decide on your level of interaction – relax, read a book, talk with friends, or participate in an activity. This month's gathering is on Thursday, February 13, from 4 to 6 pm in the Parlor.

Who Are UU? Guided Conversations

Looking for connection? Need help getting to know others at First Parish? Want to help others get to know you? Join First Parish members for a series of guided conversations on Sundays after the service. *Who Are UU?* is designed to ease us beyond small talk into deeper connections.

This month's conversation, in the Parlor, will be on Sunday, February 23. Two more are planned for March 15 and April 27.

No registration is required. Come to one or come to all. Although aimed at newer folks, feel free to join in no matter how long you have been at First Parish.

What's in the Pot?

This month's community potluck, sponsored by the STAR committee, will be held as usual on the last Wednesday of the month, February 26. All are welcome, and no sign-up is needed.

Bring a dish to share – but if you can't, come anyway. There is always plenty of food. If you do bring a dish, please list the ingredients so people with allergies know what they're eating.

If possible, bring your own dishes and utensils, which will cut down on waste and make cleanup easier. We gather from 6 to 8 pm in the Vestry.

Nancy Crasco's Works in the Parlor

On February 9 a new show opens in the Parlor featuring the work of Nancy Crasco. Join us for an opening reception after the service.

Nancy's artwork combines fiber with printmaking. Her initial exploration of traditional American quilting techniques evolved with the introduction of various printing processes. In addition to paper, she prints on silk and cotton fabrics using a gelatin plate and linoleum blocks. Research into the construction of *pojagi*, a type of Korean silk wrapping cloth, has allowed her to explore the layering of materials.

Her content is inspired and motivated by the natural world, especially problems associated with the use and misuse of our natural resources, the effects of which

are not always apparent to the naked eye. Ongoing bodies of work include Climate Change Indicators, Invasive Species, Ocean Life and Greenhouse Gases.

Nancy is a BFA graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design. She earned her master's degree at Lesley University and has been exhibiting her work nationally and internationally since 1975.

Nancy has extensive teaching experience in both public and private education and gives lectures and workshops to groups interested in fiber art and printmaking.

The Art Team:

Peggy Gardiner, Carol Chamberlain,
John Chamberlain, Steph Miserlis, Jim Ptacek,
Michaela Kirby, and Marilyn Downs

Community Craft Show

On Friday, February 28, from 5 to 7 pm, stroll on over to Arlington High School for a craft show featuring wonderful creations by students, as well as residents of Arlington. Rumor has it that your intrepid *Spire* editor will bring her fabric arts and miniatures.

Back at Ferry Beach next October

Save the date: Our Ferry Beach Retreat will be October 3 to 5 in Saco, Maine. If you'd like to join the committee that is planning this fun event, we'd love some new members. Contact ferrybeach@firstparish.info.

Monique Chaplin





Staff and Contact Information

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and mission of First Parish.

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The Spire

Diane Shriver, Editor

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Submissions due by Sunday, February 25
Items may be edited for space and clarity.

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