

Next issue deadline
Sunday, January 29

The Spire

JANUARY 1, 2023

THE FIRST SUNDAY RECORD

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

Our Treasure

What a difference a year makes! I am Carolyn Hodges, First Parish Treasurer, and have been working with Shay Crawford, Assistant Treasurer, since 2021. Our volunteer roles ensure proper financial control, monitoring, and reporting of the church's income and expenses. In our second year we are more confident but we continue to learn and improve. We are especially grateful for our fabulous First Parish community! Here's why:

Leadership

The Parish Committee closely reviews the health of First Parish each month – spiritual, social, and financial. We are grateful that our leaders remain committed to supporting our community as they prioritize volunteer support, community connections, and continued outreach while ensuring fiscal prudence. This focus helps us to perform our roles more effectively.

Expertise

The unwavering efforts of First Parish Office Manager Sara Hidalgo and Bookkeeper Liz McKersie ensure that Shay and I can do our work successfully. Please thank Sara and Liz for their expertise and assistance the next time you see them.

Volunteers

We are so grateful that several of you stepped up to help us count the Sunday offering, and for the extra lift for the Harvest Moon Fair. Shay and I certainly could not do this without you. If you are interested in helping us handle the weekly offering in 2023, please let us know!

Stewardship

Our colleagues on the Stewardship Committee recently notified community members of the status of pledges and gifts. Please watch for this notification to ensure that your pledge remains up to date. We are grateful for your generosity and that you honor your pledge commitments. First Parish remains successful because of your financial support.



Many of us give to First Parish online through Realm, using debit and credit cards. Please remember that “automatic” still does not mean “auto-magic.” Please review your Realm activity, because donation transactions require updated information for the amount, and valid information for the card. If any of your information has changed, your transactions will not fully process. You can find instructions for Realm on our church website, at www.firstparish.info/give/pledge-pay-options.

We are always happy to help with Realm, or with any other First Parish financial questions you may have. Please feel free to contact us at treasurer@firstparish.info.

— Carolyn Hodges, Treasurer
Shay Crawford, Assistant Treasurer

Blood Drive on January 4

From 11 am to 4 pm this Wednesday our Sanctuary will be filled with people giving the gift of life. Please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter “First Parish” to schedule an appointment to donate. Volunteers are welcome!

Giving First for January

Our Social Justice Committee has nominated the Boston Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) to receive half of our offering this month. CASA supports children experiencing abuse and neglect, working to ensure safe, permanent homes for court-involved children in Suffolk and Middlesex counties.

A Cozy Start to 2023 in RE

Winter is officially here, and we are excited to be spending these months with your children. We plan to have fun, share community-building experiences, and welcome the new year!

Today we kick off the year in comfy, cozy style. We have encouraged children to wear pajamas and bring stuffed animals. They will start out in the Sanctuary and then go to the Bailey Room (our basement space) for new-year stories and activities. We will not hold evening programs.

On January 8 guest artist Linda Brown and educator Mary Cummings will lead a One-Room Program highlighting Linda's amazing puppets. Together we will create tales and spin adventures for her creatures. It should prove to be a creative, imaginative, and fun time together.

We will celebrate the Martin Luther King holiday with a One-Room Program on January 15. There will be no evening programs.

Please continue to check in for updates on upcoming events with our children and youth. Contact tina@firstparish.info if you have questions, and watch for weekly updates sent to our parents' list.

— Tina Schultz
Director of Religious Education



Virtual Chowdah

At the next Alliance meeting on January 6 at 7:30 we will hear from Kay Snowden and Andrea Winslow on the topic "Sharing Our Abundance." We will gather through Zoom. To get the link, contact alliance@firstparish.info.

Sadly, we will not be able to share our traditional January Chowder Supper in person. If you'd like to preserve this tradition at home, here are some links to recipes for fish, corn, and clam chowders. If you'd rather not cook, we recommend Fresh Pond Seafood on Summer Street in Arlington.

This recipe for New England fish chowder is from Jasper White of Summer Shack fame. You can substitute clams for the fish:

www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/new-england-fish-chowder-105200

Here's a delicious vegetarian corn chowder:

www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/tyler-florence/corn-chowder-recipe-1915497

This Rhode Island-style clear clam chowder contains no cream:

www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/food-network-kitchen/rhode-island-clam-chowder-recipe-2109252

Giving to others is a great way to kick off the new year! Please join us.

— Sharen Leonard
The Women's Alliance

Zoomside Chats

This winter, following Sunday worship services, those participating on-line are invited to join in occasional conversations facilitated by leaders at First Parish. During January and February these half-hour chats will be led by our ministers, on alternate weeks.

We may discuss themes from the just-concluded service, talk about matters of religious life, or answer questions about our community at First Parish.

The link to join will be on our church website, www.firstparish.info.

- Sunday January 8 Rev. Marta Flanagan
- Sunday, January 29 Rev. Erica Richmond
- Sunday, February 5 Rev. Marta Flanagan
- Sunday, February 26 Rev. Erica Richmond

Come to an Open House

Break out of the winter chill by joining friends at a First Parish Open House. Learn a new recipe, chat with friends over tea, or just grab a comfy chair and read your book.

On Thursday, January 12, the first Open House will be held in the Parlor from 7 to 9 pm. Christa Kelleher will host a contemplative coloring session. Make a card to send to someone at the start of the new year, or just sit and enjoy the company.

Open Houses will be held on January 27, February 9, February 16, March 9, and March 24.



Sow Fun!

“Good time to plant seeds, right?” we said to 14 kids in the Bailey Room on a chilly December day. We were met with puzzled stares. Our UU kids know a lot about gardening and used words like “dormant” and “cotyledon” in the discussion that followed. Several of them attend the Thompson School, where raised garden beds are used for ongoing projects. But this project was new to them — and to us.

All the rage in Nature World this winter is planting native seeds in split milk jugs and setting them outside in hopes they will sprout seedlings in spring. Rain and snow seep in through the uncapped top. You can find instructions for this in many places, including <https://tinyurl.com/2vmmnrmc>.

We had treasure to share for this RE project. In November, the Mystic Charles Pollinator Pathways group visited for a seed swap and hands-on demo about cleaning seeds. It turns out that what we’d always thought of as dried seedheads are just husks that may or may not still hold a zillion tiny seeds. Pollinator Pathways had harvested seedheads, cleaned off the chaff, and funneled thousands of tiny seeds into neatly labeled little packets, which they shared with us. To find out more about their good work, visit www.facebook.com/groups/mysticcharlespollinators/

We started with halved jugs donated by UU folks — many thanks! Then the kids scooped soil into the bottom half of each jug and sprinkled in sand and seeds. We had a great selection of native pollinator plants, including ironweed, rose milkweed, partridge peas, panic grass, foxglove beardtongue, gaillardia, butterfly weed, Joe Pye weed, coneflower, blue lobelia, golden Alexander, goldenrod, and bee balm. We taped the milk jugs back together and put them outside. You can see them through the Vestry windows.

It’s hard to believe the seeds will survive the plunging temperatures and erratic weather we’ve been having. We can’t guarantee results, and this may just be part of a learning curve. But as a famous poet once said (almost), “Hope is the thing with seed leaves.” We’re hoping for spring seedlings we can spread and share.

So far we’ve learned that kids make enthusiastic stewards and that even in a time of cold and dark you can plant seeds by small palmfuls.

For more info, or to stay in the loop about future garden events, contact us at gardens@firstparish.info.

— Cathie Desjardins



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The Spire

Diane Shriver, Editor

Next issue: Sunday, February 5
 Submissions due by Sunday, January 29
Items may be edited for space and clarity.

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 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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