

Next issue deadline
Sunday, March 31

The Spire

MARCH 3, 2024

THE FIRST SUNDAY RECORD

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

Your Investment in Vibrant Community

Please make a pledge to invest in our vibrant community for next year! You can experience our vibrancy from worship services to social justice work to religious education to wonderful music. Our staff and lay leaders facilitate activities and programs that help us turn inward to foster spiritual growth, outward for social justice, and side by side to companion each other through changes in our lives.

How do you experience “vibrancy” at First Parish? In a child’s wise reply to a question? In an exuberant greeting? In a clarion call for social justice? In tears and smiles during our time to acknowledge great joys and deep concerns?

Maybe music touches you deeply – music of the choir or singing hymns together? For some, vibrancy could mean connecting through Zoom: meeting someone new in a breakout room or connecting with someone far away, someone you are delighted to see. Or cooking! Maybe you feel energized by the heady smells wafting from the kitchen, or by helping to cook good food to share.

Take a bit of time to reflect on something at First Parish that touches you deeply.

Financial resources are critical to support all that we do, from worship, to activism, to art-making, to religious-education programs.

Our Stewardship Campaign runs from March 3 to March 24. That’s a week less than usual! Your pledge (on Realm, or by filling out a pledge card) is a commitment to provide funds for our next fiscal year, July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025.

Pledges allow our Finance Committee and Parish Committee to build a budget for next year. It’s

important to have pledges during the campaign to allow time to plan. Everyone in the community will have an opportunity to see the budget, and members will vote on it at our Annual Meeting on May 19.

Pledges make up about two-thirds of the revenue to support our budget. The other third comes from renting our spaces, fundraisers, earned income from a trust, and a few other sources. Our expenses include paying our ministers and other staff, maintaining our building for its many uses, and all the supplies we use for programs and events.

Please commit to invest in our oh-so-vibrant community for the year ahead.

The Stewardship Committee



Blood Drive on March 6

Our next blood drive is on Wednesday, March 6, from 11 am to 4 pm. Please make an appointment if this is convenient for you. Use the ARC Blood Donor app at redcrossblood.org, or call 1-800-RED-CROSS.

We need not only donors but also volunteers. Please sign up at <https://volunteersignup.org/CT9QP>. Thank you!

STAR Opportunities

We want to encourage everyone to join a STAR program this spring. STAR stands for spirit, transformation, adventure, and reflection, and offers programs that encourage spiritual growth, religious understanding, and vibrant connections. Programming is offered by members of First Parish with support from the STAR Committee.

Here's a sampling of what's coming up:

- Seeking connections? Come to our community potlucks, held on the last Wednesday of the month from 6 to 8:30 pm in the Vestry. Or visit the monthly knitting clinic, where you can get advice for your project or just knit with others. Upcoming clinics are March 24, April 14, and June 9 after the Sunday service.
- Looking for discussion and reflection on timely topics? Come watch the movie *Join or Die*, about the importance of community and connection, on Saturday, March 9, from 7 to 10 pm.
- Need a creative outlet? Try out "Journey Inward through Meditation and Creativity," a guided meditation in which you bring something about yourself into focus through the artistic process of making a mask. It happens on Sunday, March 3 from 2 to 3:30 pm.
- Storytelling Night is back, on Thursday, March 14, from 7 to 8:30 pm in the Parlor. Tell your story without notes in five minutes or less. No registration required; just show up.

To see the full range of opportunities, visit the Events Calendar on our church website, at www.firstparish.info/events. For questions or to share a topic with the community, e-mail the committee at star@firstparish.info.



The STAR Committee

Music in March

March will be a very musical month at First Parish!

On Sunday, March 3, our Music Director Emeritus Ken Seitz will lead the First Parish Choir in one of his own compositions, along with offerings from the First Parish Bell Choir and the C-Winds.

On Music Sunday, March 10, enjoy an 11-member chamber orchestra of local professionals and First Parish instrumentalists alongside the First Parish Choir in a presentation of John Leavitt's *Missa Festiva*, Gjeilo's *The Rose*, and Whitacre's *Glow*.

On March 17 our youth will lead a fantastic service.

The services on March 24 and 31 will include music

from Paul Franzosa, David Whitford, and Heather Mumford; the First Parish Choir; and a student brass quartet from the Boston University School of Music.

Interested in learning more about music at First Parish? Send an e-mail to Interim Director of Music Daniel Parsley at musicdirector@firstparish.info to learn more about how you can make a jubilant sound in our community.

Giving First for March

This month half of our non-pledge Offering collection will support ZUMIX, an East Boston-based nonprofit dedicated to building a community through music and creative technology.

ZUMIX believes that music is the most powerful means of developing adolescent self-identity. Its award-winning music and creative technology programming is designed to equip youth with the tools necessary to reach their full potential, while creating a safe space for youth to explore who they are and who they want to be. Through community events, ZUMIX also provides access to top-quality arts experiences for a low-income, historically underserved neighborhood.

The Engine Company 40 Firehouse renovations transformed a long-abandoned building into a beautiful, inspiring cultural and performance space for ZUMIX programs, participants, and the East Boston community at large. Renovations with the latest green technology have saved a historic site that contributes to a healthier environment, creates educational opportunities for our youth, and strengthens our financial sustainability by reducing energy costs and attracting funders who support “green” organizations. The Firehouse received Gold LEED Certification, an impressive accomplishment for a renovation project.

For more information, please visit www.zumix.org.

New UU Class

Curious about Unitarian Universalism and First Parish? Join our Spring New UU Class! We are offering two sessions on March 16 and 23 from 9 am to noon in the Parlor. These engaging, interactive mornings, with snacks provided, will allow you to reflect on and share your personal religious or spiritual path and get an overview of our roots, traditions, and beliefs. There will be insights on the structure and activities that make First Parish special and ideas about ways to become more involved.

To register, e-mail newUU@firstparish.info.

Childcare is available. If you need it, please let us know how many children and their ages.

Taking Our Musical Temperature

Many thanks for the more than 100 responses we received to our survey about music at First Parish. Not surprisingly our members have diverse opinions about the wonderful vocal and instrumental offerings we experience every week. As we embark on our hunt for a new music director, the Search Committee will consider as many of our members’ thoughts and suggestions as possible.

Among the types of music preferred are a cappella, opera, musicals, Celtic, children's chorus, and members’ compositions. Spirituals but “be careful about cultural appropriation.” Types of performance? Talent shows, intergenerational orchestra, drum circles, bell choir, all-ages choir, Music Sundays. “Nice to have organ music” but also “I’m not that interested in organ music.”

Here is some data about preferences for various types of music:

	<i>Often or Occasionally</i>	<i>Seldom</i>
classical/sacred	85%	8%
sacred of other faiths	84%	5%
spiritual/gospel	85%	11%
jazz	84%	17%
rock/pop	56%	36%
folk	87%	9%
world	86%	9%
organ	69%	23%

Regarding hymns, 4% want them more often, 17% less often, and 78% about the same.

As always, differences of opinion will provide stimulation and wonder for our new director and in the future musical life of our vibrant community.

The Music Director Search Committee:
Robin Baker and David Klingsberg, co-chairs;
Heidi Swarts, Bob Rowlands,
Paul Franzosa, Carolyn Hodges

Learn About Star Island

Curious about what makes the Star Island experience so magical? Find out via Zoom on Thursday, March 28 at 7 pm. Learn what it's like to enjoy this beautiful retreat center off the coast of New Hampshire. Explore discount programs and options for financial assistance. Ask questions and gain insights into life on the island.

To register, visit starisland-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/.

Unirondack Summer Camp

Unirondack is a radically inclusive, UU-founded summer camp in the beautiful lake-filled Adirondacks on the ancestral lands of the Haudenosaunee. Spots are going fast for spring and summer programs.

The camp is also looking for prep cooks, maintenance staff, counselors, and to fill several leadership positions.

To find out more, visit www.unirondack.org.



Staff and Contact Information

Staff serve the members, leaders,
and mission of First Parish.

Rev. Marta Morris Flanagan Lead Minister
leadminister@firstparish.info

Rev. Erica Richmond Parish Minister
parishminister@firstparish.info

Office 781-648-3799 *churchoffice@firstparish.info*
website: *www.firstparish.info*

Hours Monday to Wednesday, 10 am to 4 pm
Thursday, noon to 6 pm / Friday, 10 am to 3 pm

Sara Hidalgo Office Manager
officemanager@firstparish.info

Joe Cook Office & Communications Manager
office@firstparish.info

Jacqueline De Jesus, Sexton

Religious Education

Rev. Stevie Carmody, Minister of Religious
Education *mre@firstparish.info*

Emily Spisto, RE Assistant

Rose Sawyer Marsh Youth Program Coordinator
youthadvisor@firstparish.info

Music

Daniel Parsley Interim Director of Music
daniel.parsleyr@firstparish.info

Kenneth Seitz Director of Music, Emeritus

Parish Committee *parishexec@firstparish.info*

Sara Galantowicz (Chair), Anne Quaadgras
(Vice Chair), Carolyn Hodges (Treasurer),
Joanna Pushee (Clerk), John Anderson, Jeff Keffer,
Allan Tosti, Celia Wcislo

Finance Committee *finance@firstparish.info*

Eric Segal

Human Resources *humanresources@firstparish.info*

Diane Barry

Lay Ministry *layministry@firstparish.info*

Rainer Dressler and Carolyn Carlson

The Spire

Diane Shriver, Editor

Next issue: Sunday, April 7
Submissions due by Sunday, March 31
Items may be edited for space and clarity.

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

Time-sensitive details belong in the Weekly E-mail
Bulletin – send to *weekly@firstparish.info*
by Wednesday at noon.

Leadership Development

leadership@firstparish.info Helene Newberg

Membership *membership@firstparish.info*

Amy Anderson and Maryanne McBride

Music *music@firstparish.info*

Alice Austin Panniello

Property *property@firstparish.info*

John Galantowicz

Religious Education *re@firstparish.info*

Ellen Robie

Social Justice *socialjustice@firstparish.info*

Alan Linov

Stewardship *stewardship@firstparish.info*

Marie Meter and Amy Speare

The Alliance *alliance@firstparish.info*

Andrea Winslow

Trustees of Trust Funds *trustees@firstparish.info*

Julie Dunn

Worship Associates

worshipassociates@firstparish.info

Elizabeth Hunter