

Next issue deadline  
Sunday, May 28

# The Spire

MAY 7, 2023

THE FIRST SUNDAY RECORD

VOL. 65, No. 9

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

## Wednesday Dinners

This year Summer Services will be completely virtual; we can attend from our air-conditioned abode or from a vacation spot. Because this will mean less time spent in community we are introducing Wednesday Potlucks in the Courtyard. From June 14 to September 6 we'll share an outdoor meal between 6 and 8 pm. Bring the family, bring something to share, bring your own dinner, or just bring yourself.

The Worship Associates are asking that each dinner be sponsored by one of our many groups and committees. First Parish will provide compostable paper goods, ice, and lemonade. The sponsoring group will be in charge of set up and clean up and bring one dish to start the table. There will be guidance from the STAR committee as well as the Worship Associates. Sign up to sponsor a potluck by visiting <https://tinyurl.com/2kwbfbaj6>

Getting used to a new routine can be challenging. We hope that attending services online *and* dining with other will provide a good combination of convenience and community.

— The Worship Associates

## Save the Date for Tina-bration!

Tina Schultz's going-away party will follow the June 11 worship service, her last Sunday at First Parish. If you'd like to help plan this event, please contact Jennifer Davis-Kay, who will post a signup form in early May for the various tasks needed. Watch for information about being part of a video!



## Celebrate and Vote

Our Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, May 21, at 11:30 am. All members are encouraged to attend and participate in this democratic process of self-governance. The format will again be hybrid, with both in-person and Zoom participation. To help us organize this gathering, please register at <https://tinyurl.com/2023FPAnnualMeeting>.

Our tech team will strive to ensure that everyone can participate in the discussion and voting. Thank you to our team and the ongoing support they provide!

We will recognize and celebrate staff and volunteers as we reflect on the past year. We will also elect new members to the Parish Committee and other committees, and review and vote on the proposed budget for the coming program year.

Our Reckoning and Repair Working Group will provide an update, including an affirmation of our commitment to reckon with First Parish's history around enslavement and the concept of repair.

This meeting will begin our send-off for our beloved Director of Religious Education, Tina Schultz, whose official farewell party will be held on June 11.

Annual Reports from committees will be available on the church website, [www.firstparish.info](http://www.firstparish.info), in the week leading up to the meeting. Please take a look at them to see some of the good work being done by our members and the community.

We look forward to a robust turnout to celebrate the year and engage in this important governance work. We are a self-supporting community that requires us to commit our talent, treasure, and one Sunday afternoon annually to keep our community strong.

— Joanna Pushee, Clerk

## Environmental Stewardship Assessment

First Parish was blessed to have members of the Mass Interfaith Power and Light (MIPL) conduct an Environmental Stewardship Assessment of the Meetinghouse. In their report, MIPL recommended improvements we could make in our use of energy and suggestions for how we can move toward net-zero greenhouse-gas emissions over time.

Since receiving the report the Property Committee and the Climate Action Working Group have taken several actions. This winter we have been using the existing heat pumps as the primary source for the offices, so we are looking for a new HVAC contractor who can provide better service on that system.

Our next projects include creating a line item for energy-efficiency investments in the operating budget and converting the current water heater into a heat pump. We also want to replace the rear door of the annex with one that is well-insulated and well-sealed.

### Seeking a Volunteer Energy Manager

We need a member of First Parish to serve as an energy manager to keep the church's utility use spreadsheet up to date, monitor our solar-panel electricity production, and work with staff and tenants on being aware of energy use. If this interests you, please contact [property@firstparish.info](mailto:property@firstparish.info).

In the long term we want to eliminate the use of the gas-fired burner that provides most of the heat in our building and move to heat pumps powered by renewable energy. This change will enable us to move to net zero in support of the Town of Arlington's goals for our community.

— Bill Gardiner  
Climate Action Working Group

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## Ferry Beach Registration

Each fall the First Parish community gathers for a weekend at Ferry Beach, a UU retreat center right on the beach in Saco, Maine. Whether you are a newcomer to First Parish or a long-time member, whether you are seeking connection and conversation or quiet and contemplation, the Ferry Beach retreat has something for you.

This year's retreat will be held from September 29 to October 1. Please visit [firstparish.info/ways-to-get-involved/seeking-community/ferry-beach/](http://firstparish.info/ways-to-get-involved/seeking-community/ferry-beach/) for more information about the retreat in general and

[firstparish.info/ferry-beach-2023/](http://firstparish.info/ferry-beach-2023/) for specifics about this year's retreat.

Registration is open on Realm. We encourage you to register soon! If you do not have a Realm account, you can request one at [realm@firstparish.info](mailto:realm@firstparish.info).

Questions? E-mail us at [ferrybeach@firstparish.info](mailto:ferrybeach@firstparish.info).

— The Ferry Beach Committee:  
John Chamberlain, Monique Chaplin,  
David D'Antonio, Mary McCartney, Mike Rie

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## Alliance Sets Plans for Giving

The Women's Alliance provides occasions for fellowship and to deepen the spiritual lives of its members. Every three years we review our charitable giving plan.

In May members will vote to use earnings from our trust funds to help women and families through difficult transitions via these organizations:

First Parish UU of Arlington

First Parish Youth

The UU Service Committee

The UU Women's Federation

MADRE, global women's rights

The Fistula Foundation, women's health

Sandy Hook Promise, violence prevention

RAICES, immigrant legal services

NARAL, pro-choice advocacy

The Children's Room, grief counseling

Respond, Inc., domestic violence prevention

The Arlington Youth Counseling Center

The Housing Corporation of Arlington

The Louis D. Brown Peace Institute, support for survivors of homicide

Women's Health Services

OUT MetroWest, LGBTQ youth programs

La Colaborativa, immigrant support

Food Link MA and Arlington EATS

Please join us in our ongoing mission to bring hope to the world.

— Louise Strayhorn  
The Alliance

## Evaluating Our Ministry

The Committee on Ministry has conducted its annual evaluation of ministry at First Parish from two perspectives – the work of our ordained ministers, and overall congregational life.

A survey was distributed to the Parish Committee, leaders of standing committees, and ministerial-related committees. Individuals in these groups were invited to provide written feedback about the accomplishments, opportunities, and needs of our ministers and the congregation. In addition, Rev. Marta Flanagan and Rev. Erica Richmond completed self-evaluations.

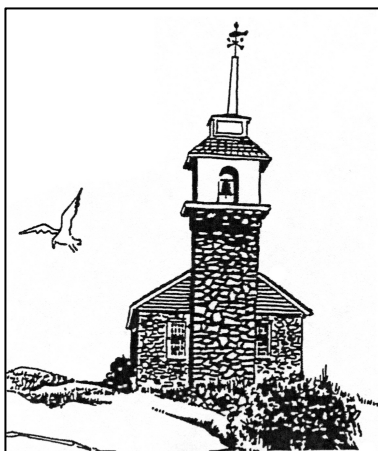
Feedback about the ministers echoed many of the reflections in each minister's self-evaluation. There was deep appreciation for the strength of our ministerial team, now in their third year of working together.

We recognize the many benefits of our two-minister model, including inspirational and thought-provoking sermons, more extensive pastoral care, diverse adult programming, and increased outreach and visibility in our community.

The congregational life survey highlighted our shared gratitude for each other, our post-pandemic resilience, and community engagement. Beyond these joys we continue to grapple with inclusivity, whether it be beyond our walls or virtual. Although we're seeing an uptick in RE attendance, there continues to be deep concern for our children and their families and prioritizing rebuilding our Religious Education program. There was an overwhelming amount of appreciation and enthusiasm for the variety of adult and social justice programming online and in-person that has been provided. As we continue to navigate the changes in our congregational life and in our individual lives, it is certain that the spirit and vitality of our congregation remains strong.

The Committee on Ministry greatly appreciates those who took part in the evaluation process. These results are consistent with what we have seen in past years and with our committee's sense of the underlying health of our faith community. Above all, we celebrate all the ways in which our congregation continues to thrive and adapt to the changing circumstances and needs of our community.

– The Committee on Ministry:  
Elizabeth Hunter, Marc Jacobson,  
Julius Pereli, Tina Silberman (chair),  
Ebonié Smith-Cooper, Andrea Winslow



## Consider Star Island

We are fortunate to have an utterly unique place nearby, just over the border in New Hampshire. Star Island offers a week of respite from the noise and rush of daily life. To spend a week far from traffic and incessant media is a blessing incarnate in the arching sky and sparkling sea.

Oh, and all your meals are prepared for you! For an *entire week* you don't have to shop, plan, prepare, or clean up. All the food is fresh and bakers create superb bread, rolls, and desserts. A snack bar and dockside grill satisfy those who prefer an irregular schedule.

There are conferences that last a week and give kids their own programs with such classic joys as swimming, flying kites, tie-dyeing, and telling stories. They get a break from screen time and interact with the world first-hand. There are also shorter conferences, some that last just a weekend. Topics are many – visit [www.starisland.org](http://www.starisland.org) to learn about them.

If you want to explore a topic in depth you can spend the week in communion with fellow enthusiasts. There are events that can fill your day completely, with theme talks, morning and evening chapel, and workshops of all kinds – artistic, spiritual, historical. In the evenings there are talent shows, bingo, dances, and such.

But you don't *have* to do anything. After an orientation that explains the way the place works there are no required activities. You can sit in a rocking chair on the wide porch of the 150-year-old Oceanic Hotel and read, or just watch the clouds drift by, the swallows and gulls swoop past, and the waves splash in Gosport Harbor.

Lots of folks from First Parish go back each and every summer to refresh their spirits. Friendly financial assistance is available. Give Star Island a try and you may become a "Shoaler" for life!

If you'd like to talk about the Star Island experience, I would be happy to answer any questions you may have. You can reach me at [spire@firstparish.info](mailto:spire@firstparish.info). If you combine all the weeks I have spent on Star it adds up to six months, so I've seen it all.

– Diane Taraz Shriver

## Our New Religious Education Director

Rev. Stevie K. Carmody will succeed our beloved Director of Religious Education, Tina Schultz, who is retiring this June after 27 years at First Parish. Stevie will start in August 2023 as our Minister of Religious Education, leading the program that serves our children and youth.

We are very excited that he is joining our staff! Members of the Parish Committee and the Search Committee will be on hand after the service on May 7 to answer any questions. We look forward to introducing Stevie to everyone at our Ingathering service next September.

Stevie is currently a staff member in the Youth and Young Adult program in the UUA's Office of Lifespan Faith Engagement, working with youth and young-adult ministries. He will finish his work there after this summer's General Assembly.

Stevie came to Unitarian Universalism through First Parish in Arlington, drawn by the way our community values young people. He regularly attended during high school. He found a spiritual home here and first felt a pull toward ministry.

Stevie studied religion at Deep Springs College and Brown University. In his early twenties he worked in a preschool for children with autism in Providence. During this time Stevie also co-created a young-adult social justice retreat at the Rowe Camp and Conference Center, a UU organization.

Stevie worked as First Parish's Religious Education Assistant in 2014 under the direction of Tina Schultz. Called to UU ministry, he completed a Master of Divinity program at Harvard Divinity School while simultaneously putting his ministry training into practice as the First Parish Youth Program Coordinator. Additionally, Stevie served as an intern minister at the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego. In 2019 First Parish voted to ordain Stevie, an event we celebrated here together.

You may have noticed that Stevie will be our *minister* of religious education rather than a director. He will

be in covenant with our lead minister and parish minister. Stevie's is a specialized ministry within the congregation, focusing on religious education for youth, children, and families, whereas Rev. Marta and Rev. Erica serve us in a more general ministry.

Of course we recognize how so much of Tina's work was a ministry, including the pastoral care she offered for children, youth, and parents. As a minister, Stevie will continue to offer that support, in coordination with the other ministers at First Parish.

Stevie is an ordained minister in fellowship (our UU term for ministerial credentialing). He is available for rites of passage such as weddings, memorial services, and child dedications.

The Search Committee included Sara Galantowicz and Anne Quaadgras from the Parish Committee,

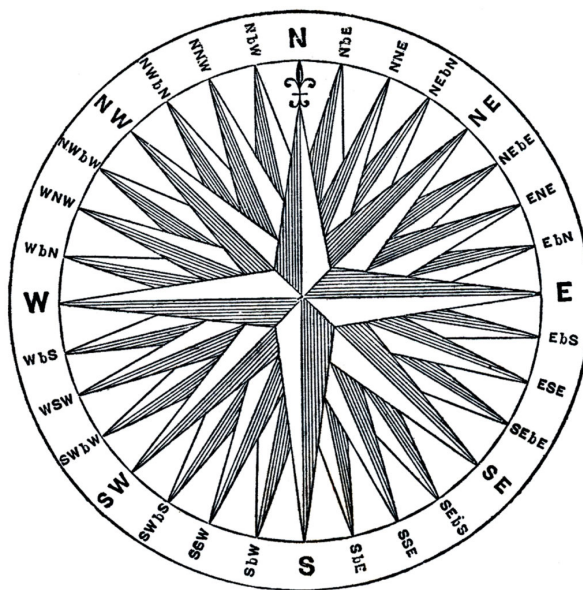
Ellen Robie and Anthony Fernandez representing the Religious Education Committee, and Marc Jacobson from the Committee on Ministry. Because Stevie worked at First Parish in the past, we followed the Unitarian Universalist Association's process for an internal candidate: interviewing him and reviewing his references before starting an open search.

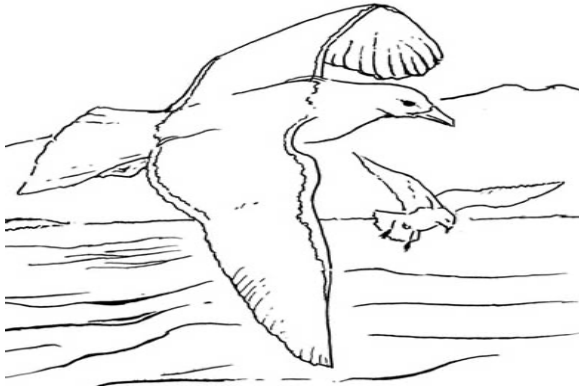
The UUA recommends a specific process for internal candidates, defined as someone who is already a member or staff member of the congregation.

The Search Committee must decide yes or no on an internal candidate before considering other candidates. In April Stevie was recommended unanimously by the Search Committee, and the Parish Committee unanimously voted to hire him.

Both Tina and Marta wholeheartedly endorse Stevie. Says Tina, "I feel confident that Stevie's unique blend of skills with children and teens, as well as his familiarity with the people of our congregation, our systems, and policies, will make for a smooth transition. I am so happy to pass the baton to Stevie and believe his energy and vision will help rebuild and re-energize our program after the challenges of Covid."

Marta adds, "What an enormous pleasure it will be to work again alongside Stevie. I am confident his work among us will be of great benefit to our children, youth, and families."





Stevie and his partner Liz will move to the area in the summer, although they are still figuring out the details. Their grey cat, Violet, will be coming, too. Stevie's parents, Matt and Jen, live in Arlington and are very pleased with this development.

Stevie loves cooking and takes great pleasure in making meals with other people. He is a long-distance runner and has completed his first two marathons, with more planned. He is also getting into birding, but notes it is "just beginning." Stevie says, "It's helping me listen better and get in touch with nature." We may see Stevie out on a run or taking in nature, and he surely will be in the First Parish kitchen.

Stevie says, "I am delighted to serve the congregation as minister of religious education. I am honored to carry on Tina's legacy and help chart our future together. First Parish is a vibrant, empowered community with an incredibly dedicated staff team. We have committed to our religious education program, especially for our youth, over and over again. Let's continue that work together."

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## Tai Chi in the Courtyard

During the month of May, Joe Hughes will lead Tai Chi in the Courtyard each Saturday from 9 to 10 am. In bad weather the session will meet in the Bailey Room. Direct any questions to [star@firstparish.info](mailto:star@firstparish.info).

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## Reflecting On and In Nature

Join Rev. Erica Richmond for a program and field trip exploring the writings of three important Unitarians — Louisa May Alcott, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Henry David Thoreau — considering their reflections on nature and spirituality.

This is a two-part program. First we will gather in the Parlor on Tuesday, May 9, from 7 to 8:30 pm. Then on Saturday, May 13, we will visit Sleepy Hollow

Cemetery in Concord from 1 to 2:30 pm. This cemetery was founded by Emerson and is the final resting place of these three transcendentalists. Given that Sleepy Hollow is publicly owned and filled with rolling untamed hills, it is considered the country's first conservation land.

Registration is required — please do so on Realm. To open a Realm account, visit [realm@firstparish.info](mailto:realm@firstparish.info). If you need help, contact the church office.

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## A Camp Focused on UU Values

Unirondack is a summer camp that values acceptance, justice, equity, compassion, and the inherent worth and dignity of all people. Its youth-centered space leads to fun by working to remove the barriers of acceptance the world puts on us. The results are beautiful and come at a time when the world badly needs places that tell youth they belong.

To learn more about Unirondack please visit [www.unirondack.org](http://www.unirondack.org). There are programs for families, young adults, and adults as well as for youth. You're never too old to play, grow, and learn.





## 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*

**Jose Ferraz** Sexton

### Religious Education

**Tina Schultz** Director of Religious Education  
*dre@firstparish.info*

**Rowan Wheeler** Religious Education Assistant  
*youthadvisor@firstparish.info*

**Rose Sawyer Marsh** Youth Program Coordinator  
*youthadvisor@firstparish.info*

### Music

**Jonathan Colby** Director of Music  
*musicdirector@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), Tom Estabrook, Jeff Keffer,  
Marie Meteer, Allan Tosti, Celia Wcislo

**Finance Committee** *finance@firstparish.info*  
Eric Segal

**Human Resources** *humanresources@firstparish.info*  
Diane Barry

**Lay Ministry** *layministry@firstparish.info*  
Jerry Silberman

## The Spire

Diane Shriver, Editor

Next issue: Sunday, June 4  
Submissions due by Sunday, May 28  
*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.

### Leadership Development

*leadership@firstparish.info* Helene Newberg

**Membership** *membership@firstparish.info*  
Susan Moore

**Music** *music@firstparish.info*  
Alice Austin

**Property** *property@firstparish.info*  
John Galantowicz

**Religious Education** *re@firstparish.info*  
Ellen Robie

**Social Justice** *socialjustice@firstparish.info*  
Alan Linov

**Stewardship** *stewardship@firstparish.info*

**The Alliance** *alliance@firstparish.info*

**Trustees of Trust Funds**  
*trustees@firstparish.info*  
Annette Sawyer

**Worship Associates**  
*worshipassociates@firstparish.info*  
Elizabeth Hunter