

Next issue deadline
Sunday, November 2

The Spire

OCTOBER 5, 2025

THE FIRST SUNDAY RECORD

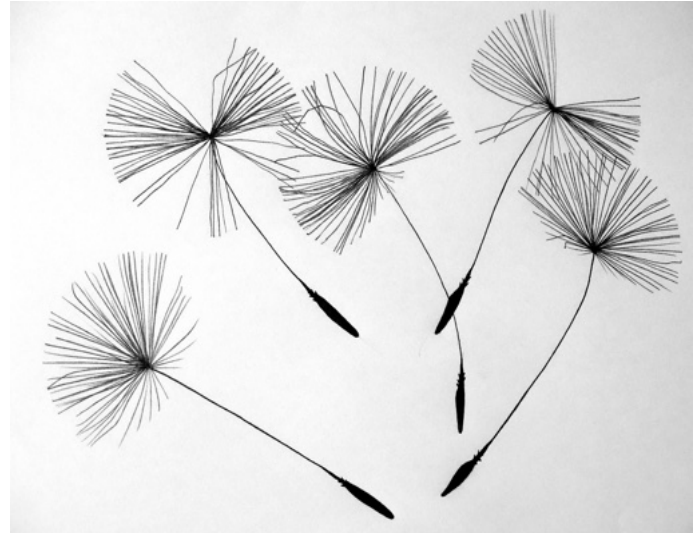
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First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Arlington, 630 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, MA 02476 • Gathered 1733

Live Your Values, Leave a Legacy

On Sunday, October 26, join Joel Carlton-Gysan and Kay Snowden for “Planned and Tax-Savvy Giving,” offering guidance and inspiration grounded in our UU values and community. It starts at noon in the Parlor and lasts an hour. Refreshments will be served.

The program, sponsored by the Stewardship Committee and the Trustees, is designed to help you explore how your values can shape the world, both during your lifetime and beyond. It covers the definition of planned giving, tax-wise ways to be generous now, and simple ways to make a lasting impact through wills and beneficiary designations. Questions? Contact stewardship@firstparish.info.



Listening to Nature

Patricia Crotty's work is on view in the Parlor until November 16. Her colorful gestural paintings and collages are inspired by nature and the hidden forces that lie beneath everyday experience. Her work reflects the tension between chaos and order, fluidity and form, reflecting the natural world's unpredictability and underlying design.

Patricia says, “My abstract landscapes develop out of an ongoing process of sketching and observing in nature, then reworking the images back at the studio. There, I add and subtract paint, draw lines, add collage materials until the parts come together to form a harmonious whole.

“My hope is to create an immersive experience that evokes the feeling of finding transcendence in nature, a sense of being part of the natural world. This is more important than ever today, as we look for solutions toward climate sustainability.”

Crotty studied at the Sorbonne and her work has been shown in galleries in the Boston area and in New York, Amsterdam, and Paris.

On November 6 she will give a talk in the Parlor.

Congregational Art Shows

First Parish invites artists to participate in two shows that draw on the deep talents of our congregation. The theme is Hope and Resistance in Difficult Times.

The shows will run December 7 to February 2, and April 5 to June 6.

Each artist can submit up to two pieces, limited in size to 30 by 30 inches. The case in the Narthex is available for three-dimensional sculpture or pottery. If you have questions or need more information, please contact artshow@firstparish.info.

Wednesday Evening Chapel

Each Wednesday evening between now and the end of February we will gather on Zoom for evening chapel. Led by Rev. Erica, the chapel is 25-minutes of sharing, silence, poetry, and song. Come to one, or attend them all. There is no need to sign up.

Visit our church website at www.firstparish.info to find a blue link to click to enter the Zoom space.

New Name, Fresh Mission

The LGBTQIA+ Affirming Committee (formerly the Welcoming Congregation Committee) is pleased to provide an update on our activities and recent name change. Our new name better reflects our commitment to communicating our intentionally welcoming space for everyone of all sexual and gender identities at First Parish.

The Welcoming Congregation Committee was established by the Parish Committee in January 2023 for a three-year term. Its initial charge was to reinvigorate and maintain First Parish's Welcoming Congregation designation with the UUA and to collaborate with leadership to guide the congregation in completing the Five Practices of Welcome Renewal annually. We approach this mission through collaboration with other First Parish committees, individuals, groups, and leaders, including our clergy, religious education, Lay Ministers, Worship Associates, Social Justice, and the Alliance.

We are delighted to announce that First Parish Arlington has renewed our designation as a Welcoming Congregation for the second year, and with the support of the LGBTQIA+ Affirming Committee we are on track for renewal in 2026. This annual commitment to renewal means we, as a community, agree to be proactive and intentional about fully welcoming and including LGBTQIA+ people, concerns, and lives in our congregational life.

Some of the ways we have been more intentional about increasing and strengthening our inclusion of LGBTQIA+ people and families over the past two years have included multiple worship services centering LGBTQIA+ concerns and lives, recognizing many special days of observance of milestones and events in the larger LGBTQIA+ communities locally and nationally throughout the year with an event and with a special second chalice on the chancel table. We have collaborated with other committees and church groups and offered educational films and discussions, book discussions, special art exhibits, and seminars. In

addition, we have made recommendations and helped First Parish offer space and financial support for LGBTQIA+ non-profit and local groups to support their efforts in providing safe spaces, peer groups, economic assistance, and social justice advocacy for those in need in the LGBTQIA+ communities.

A core and continuing goal of the LGBTQIA+ Affirming Committee is to integrate LGBTQIA+ issues and events more fully and holistically into the wider congregation. We recognize and celebrate that we are all part of a Welcoming Congregation. The role of the LGBTQIA+ Affirming Committee within our Welcoming Congregation is to encourage a deepening of our inclusion and integration of all LGBTQIA+ people in our practices of welcome.

Our practices include inward facing and outward facing activities. We help create and coordinate events and actions each year. We help find resources and

offer insights and guidance on activities. We take part in large public events, such as Boston Pride & the People parades, and direct actions like sending hundreds of postcards of appreciation to healthcare workers who offer gender-affirming care practices. We host events such as the Transgender Day of Remembrance & Resilience on our front lawn, and we demonstrate our commitment to full LGBTQIA+ inclusion with our newly refurbished flagpole and the displaying of a Progress Pride flag on our grounds. In the last year, the Committee collaborated with the Arlington Rainbow Commission including one First Parish member joining as a commissioner. We worked

with Mystic Valley Action for Reproductive Justice, the Social Justice Committee and Alliance, and supported community partners such as The Boston Alliance of LGBTQ+ Youth (BAGLY), the Resilient Sisterhood Project, and the Transforming Hearts Collective. And please admire the new Pride Quilt made by Wendy Page and donated to the amazing First Parish rotating quilt display!

We are excited to be part of strengthening our church's commitment to the full welcome and participation of LGBTQIA+ communities and people



as members of First Parish. Please talk to any of us about your ideas, suggestions, and questions as to how you can participate in activities as we all move forward together. You can contact the committee at welcoming@firstparish.info if you want to know more, want to join the committee, and to share your thoughts.

The LGBTQIA+ Affirming Committee:
Zoe Stewart (Chair), Lisa Davis, Loren Gomez,
Ruben Hopwood, Wendy Page, Carolyn White, and
Rev. Erica Richmond (Ministerial Advisor)

The Fair is On the Horizon

Each November, on the Saturday before Thanksgiving, we hold our annual Harvest Moon Fair. This annual marketplace and café raises vital funds for our church and its mission, and we welcome the wider community into our space for a lively array of goods, including a delicious lunch.

There are things we can do now. Start some cuttings or repot some plants to donate to the Greenery. Bake something sweet and freeze it to bring to the Buttery on the morning of the fair. If you're clearing closets, set aside good stuff for the fair — items in excellent condition that you yourself would spend money on.

The Jewelry Box always does a brisk business, so sort through your baubles and bag some up to donate. Please put chains and such in their own bags to avoid entanglements. Jewelry boxes, pouches, and holders are also welcome.

Make a stack of books you have finished reading for the Book Nook.

The fair works because the whole community pitches in. Please plan to sign up to work a shift at a booth, or to help out in the café, when the call goes out next month. Volunteer opportunities are not limited to the day of the fair — we need help with setup and sorting donations starting on Thursday, and it's great to have folks with fresh energy when the fair closes at 3 pm and we have to restore the building for the next morning's service.

The kitchen is always a great place to help out, and one of the major joys of the fair is scenting all those wonderful aromas as we work together during setup. Helping at the fair is a great way to get to know people, whether you've been coming forever or are new. There is always someone new to meet!

In-Person Meditation on Mondays

Looking for support for your meditation practice? Come to church for 30 minutes of silent sitting on Mondays from 6 to 7 pm in the Parlor. Both beginners and experienced meditators are welcome, and there is no ongoing commitment — just drop in whenever you like. For more information, contact meditation@firstparish.info.

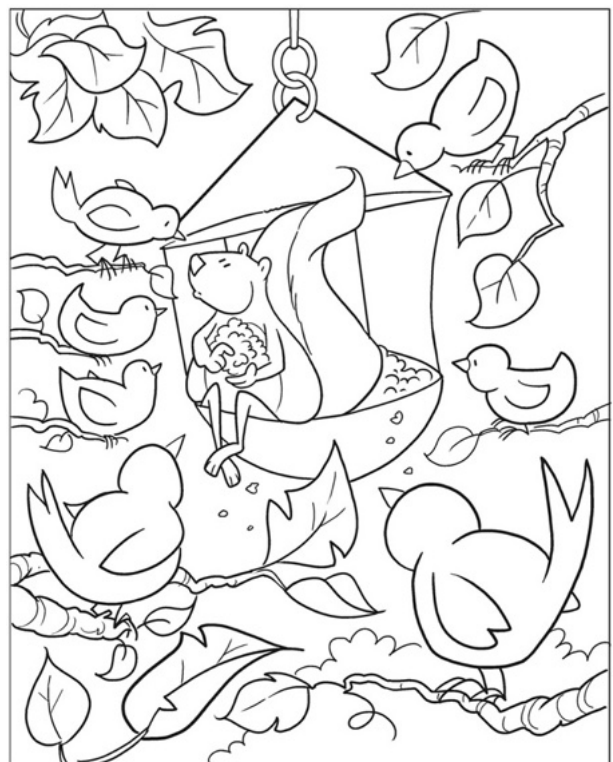
Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina, held via Zoom, is a method of reading and listening, lingering with, and sharing personal responses to selected texts from the Bible or other sources. Diverse responses to the text provide new insights and help us grow in our spiritual lives and set intentions for our days.

New people are always welcome. The group meets in the morning:

- Tuesdays from 7 to 8 am
- Wednesdays from 9 to 10 am
- Thursdays 8 from 8 to 9 am

No registration is necessary. Visit our church website at www.firstparish.info to receive a welcome e-mail with the Zoom link. You can also find there a calendar of readings and a participation guide.





Staff and Contact Information

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

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The Spire

Diane Shriver, Editor

Next issue: Sunday, November 2
Submissions due by Sunday, October 26
Items may be edited for space and clarity.

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If you do not have e-mail, contact the office.

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by Wednesday at noon.

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