

Next issue deadline
Sunday, November 26

The Spire

NOVEMBER 4, 2023

THE FIRST SUNDAY RECORD

VOL. 66, No. 3

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

Another November, Another Fair!

Our Harvest Moon Fair will take place, in a long tradition, on the Saturday before Thanksgiving. We invite absolutely everyone to participate; this wonderful community-building event works because we all pitch in!

Donations can be dropped off in the Vestry starting on the Sunday before the fair. *Please* do not bring anything in sooner, for there is nowhere to put it.

We have learned a lot over the years about what sells and what does not. To avoid having to throw things away or haul them to Goodwill, please read on.

YES to books! We want books of general interest; please do not give us old textbooks.

NO to CDs, DVDs, and their holders. That technological ship has sailed!

YES to kitchen wares. Pots, pans, spatulas, baking dishes, and appliances sell well. Items should be working, intact, and clean.

NO, NO, NO to old dish sets. It's a tragedy, but year after year china ends up at Goodwill after the fair. We can move the more modern, durable sets in white or fiesta-style, but not older styles, no matter how lovely.

YES, YES, YES to Jewelry. The Jewelry Box is a key part of fair revenue every year. Costume jewelry sells well, and modest sterling silver and gold pieces are especially welcome. The booth also takes handbags, purses, scarves, and jewelry boxes.

YES to electronics. Computers, monitors, laptops, tablets, and audio equipment are great for the cause – and don't forget mice, keyboards, and other



accessories. Not using your home office anymore? Send it to the fair. Computers in particular can take a while to set up, so unlike other items we would like you to bring them in as soon as possible.

BUT NO to old electronics.

Please, no VHS players, monitors under 20 inches, or computers older than ten years.

YES YES YES! to baked goods.

The Buttery is a big favorite. Bring your yummys in the night before or on the morning of the fair. Items should be individually wrapped and include a list of ingredients, very important to keep people with allergies safe.

Please sign up to help out at a booth or in the café! Do it on-line or at coffee hour. Some tasks

happen at times other than fair day, so even if you're busy that Saturday you may still be able to help out. Questions? Send me a note at fair@firstparish.info.

Aaron Kitzmiller
Head Honcho, Harvest Moon Fair

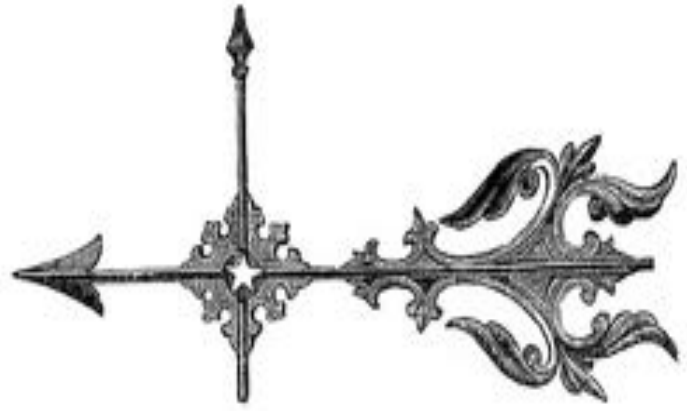
Help Find Our Next Music Director

We plan to hire an interim music director for this program year and search for a permanent director who will join us in 2024. The Music Committee welcomes help with the search process. You do not have to be a musician – we'd like people from all parts of the congregation. We'll survey the congregation in early 2024, post the position in March, and see candidates through June. If interested, please contact Robin Baker and Paul Franzosa at musicsearch@firstparish.info by December 1.

The Music Committee

Charting A Course for Our Future

Please join us after the service on **Sunday, December 3** for a facilitated discussion to explore what we might aim for in our liberal religious community three, five, or ten years from now. This all-congregation event will be an opportunity to inform a vision and shared priorities for who we want to be and how we will get there, as part of our year-long focus on strategic planning. We look forward to hearing from all who participate in life at First Parish. Lunch and childcare will be provided.



Parish Committee Notes

At our meeting on September 19 we welcomed Hannah LaFranzo, Christina Yuan, and Joe Li from the Montessori Children's House of Arlington, First Parish's tenant, for an open conversation. The Montessori programming and First Parish's Religious Education program are compatible, and both parties look forward to continuing our interactions. The Parish Committee applauded the school's celebration of its first anniversary in Arlington.

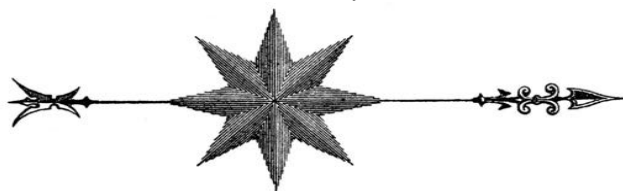
The committee also welcomed Alice Panniello, chair of the Music Committee. Alice is serving as chair of the Interim Music Staffing Committee, which is conducting a search for an interim music director. We expressed gratitude for all of the committee's hard work so far.

From the ministers' reports, we celebrated several positive themes:

- continued strong participation in worship services.
- robust RE for children and youth with about 60 average participants.
- programming focused on spiritual depth and learning from one another.
- finding synergy and shared common purpose.

At the Parish Committee retreat on September 16, two priorities emerged: envisioning a five-year and ten-year plan, and forming a working group to focus on volunteerism and engagement. Both of these themes are moving forward.

Joanna Pushee, Clerk



Calling All Photographers!

The First Parish Photography Art Show will open on Sunday, December 3. To participate, please send an email to the Art Wall Committee by **November 7**, at artshow@firstparish.info. More details will be shared with everyone who contacts us, but we can accept two images and they will need to be framed with a wire hanger on the back. The deadline for submitting photos is November 30.

Art Show Committee:

Carol & John Chamberlain, Deb Lewis,
Jim Ptacek, Peggy Gardiner, Steph Miserlis

Remember Their Names: International Transgender Day of Remembrance

Each year on November 20 people the world over hold candlelight vigils and gather in communities to remember, mourn, and commemorate the trans, non-binary, and gender-diverse people who have died in the past year due to anti-trans violence against them.

The Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) started in Boston on November 20, 1999, to memorialize the brutal murder of Rita Hester, a 34-year-old Black trans woman who was killed in her apartment in Allston the year before on November 28, 1998. Also remembered in the founding of the TDOR are Chanelle Pickett, a Black trans woman murdered in Watertown, Mass., in November 1995 and Monique Thomas, a Black trans woman killed in her home in Dorchester in September 1998.

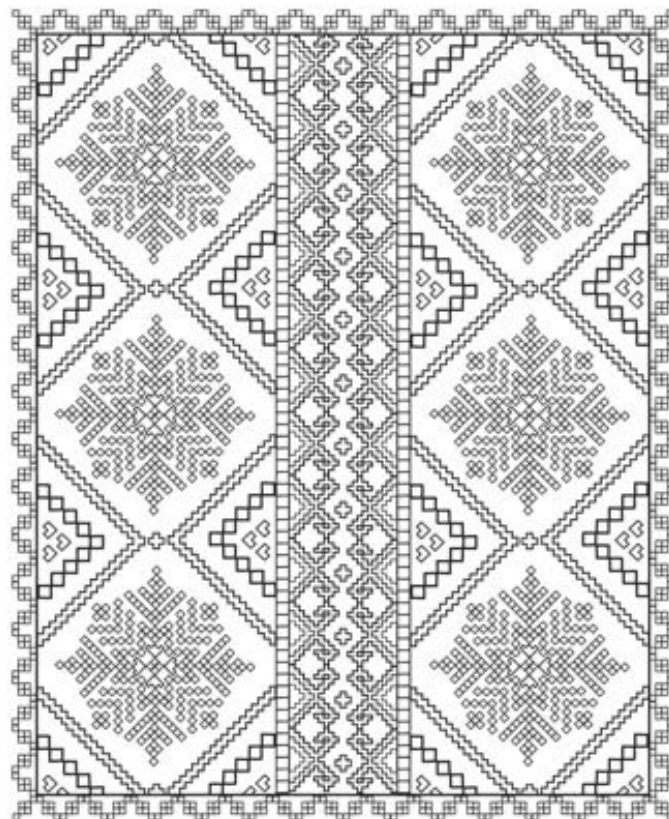
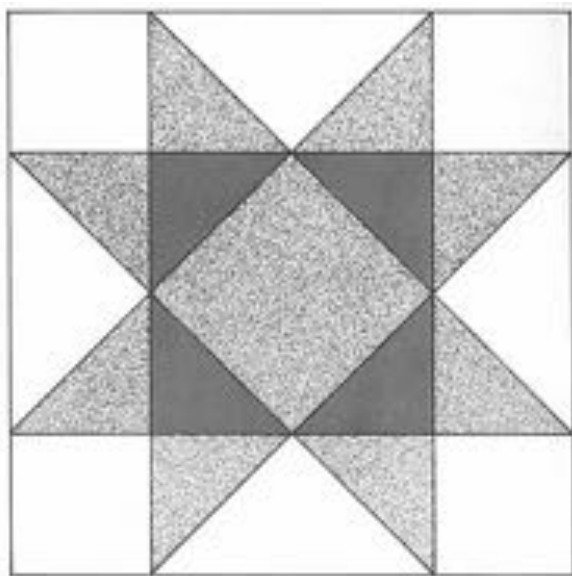
Community gatherings remembered and honored these women and their authentic lives in the years shortly after their deaths. They also worked to correct the erasure, misrepresentations, and misgendering by the media coverage of these women.

The annual international vigil was founded in 1999 by Gwendolyn Ann Smith, Nancy Nangeroni, and Jahaira DeAlto and first took place in Boston and San Francisco in November 1999. The vigils are a collective mourning and remembering of the dead.

TDOR vigils are also a response to the struggles of trans and non-binary people to create the right to simply exist visibly and to draw attention to the extraordinary levels of violence and discrimination in the society towards gender-diverse people. TDOR is a call to witness and to confront anti-trans violence – a call to action for both trans and non-binary people and for cisgender (not trans) people. It is encouragement and motivation to move together from sympathy and passive memorials to responsibility and actively transforming our own and our society’s practices to end anti-trans hatred and discrimination and protect vulnerable people.

At a TDOR vigil traditionally, the names of trans and non-binary people who have died in the previous 12 months from October 1 to September 30 are read aloud, handed out on fliers, or displayed along with brief biographies of who they were and when they died. Often the vigils have time for community members and allies to speak, and some vigils take solemn candlelight walks together carrying the names of those who are remembered.

During the Transgender Awareness Week preceding the TDOR vigil, activities organized by community members and allies educate the public, share stories, and raise awareness of trans and gender-diverse people to increase advocacy around discrimination faced by community members. Events during Transgender Awareness Week focus locally and may include



community events such as art shows, films, marches, shows, and food drives.

Everyone can participate by attending a TDOR vigil or helping organize and support one. People can participate by learning about trans and gender-diverse people, learning about local, regional, and national anti-trans violence and the significant increases in anti-trans legislation, and by taking part in every way possible to advocate for and defend the human and legal rights of gender-diverse people to exist, to have access to equitable healthcare, housing, and job opportunities – to live without isolation, fear, and discrimination.

The Arlington TDOR will take place on the meetinghouse front lawn for the second year on November 20. The TDOR is organized by Kym Goldsmith, a non-binary/gender diverse Commissioner for the Arlington Rainbow Commission. First Parish is hosting a casual, low-key social event in the Parlor specifically for trans and gender-diverse community members at 6:15 pm before the 7 pm public candlelight vigil on the lawn. The pre-vigil gathering will include pizza, light refreshments, and a crafting activity to engage both introverts and any youth who attend so everyone has something to enjoy.

All are invited to participate in the candlelight vigil and anyone who is part of the trans and gender-diverse community is welcome at the 6:15 pm social event in the Parlor, as well. Come join us and support the trans and gender-diverse people in our congregation and in the wider community, who are part of our collective families and lives.

Committees, Committees, Committees!

“The cartoon titled ‘New Member’s Worst Nightmare’ shows an elderly man, with a long flowing beard, speaking to a young couple new to the church. The couple looks at a huge bulletin board listing all the congregation’s committees. At the top is emblazoned: ‘Our Committees Need You!’

The old man says, “Most people are on nine or ten committees, but since you’re new I’m sure people will understand if you only join six or seven to start.”

The best part of the cartoon is the list of committees themselves: Finance Committee, Investment Committee, Board of Trustees. But the list goes on. . . Thermostat Control Committee, Committee for more Comfortable Pews, Committee for the Promotion of Committees, Plant Watering Committee, Pigeon Control Committee. The cartoon is a good one. It makes me wince. It makes us laugh – or not – because it’s so close to the truth.”

From *Transforming Liberal
Congregations for the New Millennium*
by Roy D. Phillips, 1996

In June the Leadership Development Committee (LDC) met with the Parish Committee to discuss just how hard their role of recruiting people to join church committees has become. We are not as bad off as the cartoon would suggest, but a task that has been difficult has, since the pandemic, become extremely difficult, and for very good reasons.

In the post-pandemic world, time is more precious than ever before, especially time with our loved ones. Many people are reluctant to commit to a three-year term. Many are uncomfortable committing to attend monthly committee meetings for an open-ended set of tasks. Most importantly, who comes to First Parish to take on administrative responsibilities that many must attend to in their workplace?

We have an active and vibrant congregation. People have returned to First Parish in pre-pandemic

numbers, unlike in most other congregations. We come to First Parish to nourish our spirits, to join a loving congregation in worship, to minister to each other, and to join in opportunities to question and protest the injustices in our time. The LDC told the Parish Committee those are the activities to which many wish to devote their time at First Parish, not administering the church. And yet, the property must be maintained, our children taught, the bills paid, pledges made, and our finances administered, among other things.

The Parish Committee heard our concerns loudly and clearly. A group of Parish Committee members, listed below, joined by Kiki Giatis from the LDC, have formed a working group to take this on. We don’t begin with any assumptions or solutions. The Parish Committee is open to all possibilities and to experimenting with alternatives. Foremost, we want to hear your ideas and suggestions.

After meeting with the LDC and committee chairs at the Leadership Roundtable Luncheon, the working group plans to meet individually with chairs and anyone else who would like to talk about this issue. We also will schedule drop-in meetings to hear from members of the congregation.

Feel free to speak to any members of the working group after services, or e-mail us at FPworkinggroup@firstparish.info.

Anne Quaadgras, Celia Wcislo,
Kiki Giatis, Joanna Pushee,
Al Tosti, and Jeff Keffer

What’s With the Hymn Sings?

We are trying out a series of daytime hymn sings, sponsored by the Grace Notes, the STAR Adult-Education Committee, and the Music Committee. Please feel free to drop into the Parlor on two upcoming Wednesdays, November 8 and December 6, between 2 and 3 pm.



Our numbers will be small, and we will learn over this trial set whether we have a contingent who would appreciate this ongoing singing opportunity. Come, and bring a friend if you like.

Our format is very relaxed: for support, we either have an electronic companion playing congregational recordings or a volunteer pianist. Wendy Covell, once upon a time our organist, has offered to join us in November and it will be great to catch up with her. We also welcome instrumentalists who would like to play along on melody or harmony.

We sit in a circle, many of us in masks, peruse a list of hymns, and build our "play list" on the spot. Melodies are familiar but not always by name!

Our Parlor gives us a space to be brave: We can sing melody, and we can try adding harmonies from the hymnal or from our own experience. At each session we'll review an interesting harmony line together.

We have hymnals and songbooks. Some of us read easily; others listen and sing with, realizing as we go that this collaborative approach works very well.

You can attend via Zoom, if you wish. Watch for a registration link in the on-line announcement.

If you have any questions, please e-mail STAR@firstparish.info.

Cheri Minton

Summer Services on Our Website

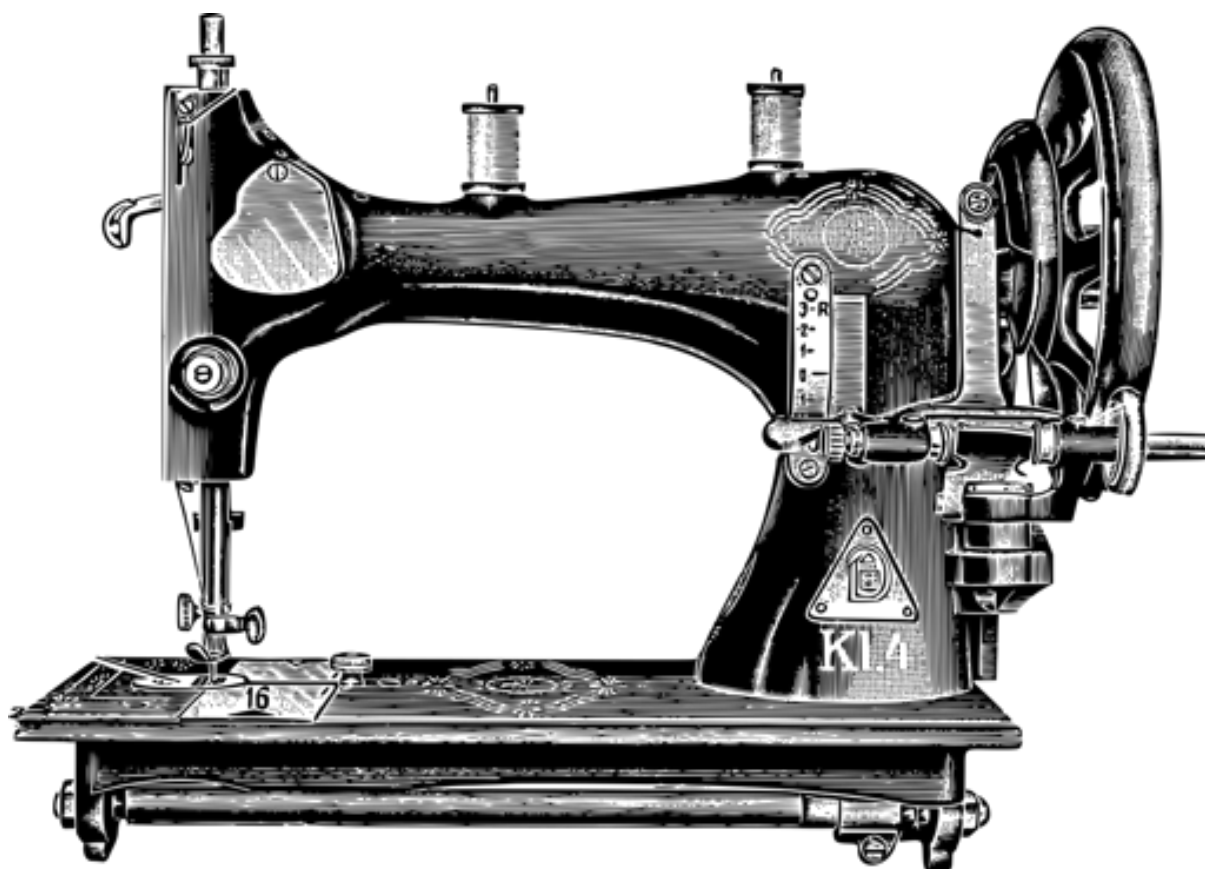
If you missed one of the wonderful services offered via Zoom over the summer, or would just like to watch one again, visit our church website at www.firstparish.org. The services are listed individually by date under the News section.

Sell Those Quilt Tickets!

This year's Harvest Moon Fair Quilt is a stunner!

In addition to buying tickets for yourself, please offer everyone you know the opportunity to win it by selling tickets to friends, family, neighbors, and colleagues.

Tickets cost \$2 for one, \$10 for six, and \$20 for twelve. You can pick up tickets to sell, and return purchased tickets and money, at Coffee Hour on November 5 and 12, or at the Harvest Moon Fair on November 18. Please contact flashquilt@firstparish.info if you have any questions.





Staff and Contact Information

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and mission of First Parish.

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The Spire

Diane Shriver, Editor

Next issue: Sunday, December 3
Submissions due by Sunday, November 26

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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