



“WORKINGS”
A GUIDE TO FIRST PARISH
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
OF ARLINGTON
2024 - 2025

“Workings” is updated throughout the year;
please visit our website for the most recent version.

www.firstparish.info
email: office@firstparish.info

630 Massachusetts Avenue
Arlington, MA 02476
781-648-3799

WELCOME TO FIRST PARISH!

Unitarian Universalism is a liberal religion. We believe personal experience, conscience and reason are final authorities in religion. We put religious insights to the test of our hearts and minds. We uphold the free and responsible search for truth and meaning and are not bound to any statement of belief or creed. This is a free faith bound by our aspiration to act in love.

To learn more about First Parish, visit our website at *www.firstparish.info*.

First Parish is a welcoming congregation, warmly and openly welcoming to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual people. In 2024, we received the denominational renewal status for our ongoing commitment to LGBTQIA+ people.

First Parish is a proud voluntary member of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, *www.uua.org*.



*Please send updates to clerk@firstparish.info
or office@firstparish.info.*

Dancing chalice by Kendall Dudley.

Updated on January 31, 2025

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IMPORTANT DATES 2024 – 2025

Ingathering Service, 10 a.m.	Sunday, September 8
Arlington Town Day – Pie Palace & “Man-Made” Chili	Saturday, September 21
UnFerry Beach	Saturday, September 28
New UU Classes, 9am – 12pm	Saturdays, October 26 & November 2
Autumn Music Sunday	Sunday, November 17
Harvest Moon Fair (everybody pitches in!)	Saturday, November 23
Thanksgiving Sunday	Sunday, November 24
“Embracing the Darkness” Worship, 7 p.m.	Friday, December 13
Candlelight Christmas Eve Services, 4pm + 6pm	Tuesday, December 24
Stewardship Sunday	Sunday, March 2
Spring Music Sunday	Sunday, March 16
Youth Group Service, 10 a.m.	Sunday, April 6
250th Anniversary of the Battle of Menotomy	Saturday, April 19
Easter Service. 10 a.m.	Sunday, April 20
Shinn Service, 10 a.m. (social justice guest speaker)	Sunday, April 27
Annual Meeting, 11:30 a.m.	Sunday, May 18
Coming of Age Sunday service	Sunday, June 1
Lay-Led Summer Services	June 16 – Sept. 8

NOTE: For some of our intergenerational services, children (grades K-7) are invited to stay in the sanctuary for part or the whole of the service. Nursery and Pre-K rooms are available every Sunday. On Sunday, December 22nd and Sunday, February 2nd, children (grades K-7) will not have regular Religious Education classes, but are instead invited to participate in an interactive, intergenerational worship service.

MINISTERS & STAFF

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

Rev. Erica Federspiel Richmond, Parish Minister
parishminister@firstparish.info

Rev. Tricia Brennan, Adjunct Minister
tricia@firstparish.info

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

Daniel Parsley, Music Director
daniel.parsley@firstparish.info

Rose Sawyer Marsh, Youth Group Coordinator
youthadvisor@firstparish.info

Bella Jaffe, Religious Education Assistant
reassistant@firstparish.info

Kenneth Seitz, Pianist and Director of Music, Emeritus

Ebiere Omoregie, Office Manager
officemanager@firstparish.info

Allison Sillers, Administrative/Communications Associate
office@firstparish.info

General First Parish business is handled by the office staff.
Email *office@firstparish.info*, or call 781-648-3799

Office Hours

Monday thru Friday, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm,

The ministers are available by appointment,
except as noted below. To schedule an appointment, the
ministers are best reached by their individual emails (above).

Marta takes her sabbath on Monday

Stevie takes his sabbath on Wednesday

Rev. Erica takes her sabbath on Friday

Rev. Erica will be on parental leave from late Jan. to May

On Saturdays and Sundays, all three ministers
prepare for and lead worship and other programing.

GETTING CONNECTED

What are easy ways to connect with people here?

(1) Sign up for the **weekly e-Bulletin** that is emailed to members and friends each Thursday. www.firstparish.info/ebulletin

Browse the “News” and “Events” sections on our website www.firstparish.info to learn about what’s happening and **show up for anything!**

(2) Help out at the **Harvest Moon Fair**. A fun all-hands-on-deck community-building project!

(3) Come to **Alliance gatherings**, which combine a variety of programs with time to talk and eat and get to know each other, usually on one Friday evening each month.

(4) Look through the **Committees & Groups section** of this guide. Newcomers might be especially interested in the musical opportunities and the groups for spiritual growth and mutual support. If you want to go deeper, consider joining a **Covenant Group** in January.

(5) When worship is inside the meeting house, stop by the **Welcoming Table** and talk with a volunteer about your interests and what you’re looking for. Or talk with anyone who indicates they are a long-time member – most of us are happy to answer questions! Alternatively stop by the Newcomer’s page on our web site and explore. www.firstparish.info/newcomers

How can I become an official member of First Parish?

People interested in membership are encouraged to first join a “New UU” class that is usually offered twice a year. Participants learn more about UUism, First Parish, and what membership means, as they get to know each other and explore their own spiritual paths. You don’t have to be new to UUism and you don’t have to join First Parish afterwards, though you will have that option.

One becomes an official member by “signing the book.” New members are invited to participate in an optional membership ceremony during a worship service.

To learn more, email NewUU@firstparish.info.

THE GENERALIST MINISTRY TEAM

First Parish is served by the elected leaders, volunteers, and staff. First Parish is also served by two full time ordained ministers. Both ministers preach and participate in worship services and are available for pastoral care, weddings, and memorial services.

Rev. Marta Flanagan is the Lead Minister called by a vote of the congregation in 2009 and is generally called “Marta.” Rev. Erica Richmond is the Parish Minister hired by the Parish Committee in August 2020 and is generally called “Rev. Erica.”

They say their ministry together is grounded in “a sense of a Spirit moving within and among us, service to First Parish, and a call to work for justice, both within and beyond the walls of the meetinghouse.”

How do I reach a minister?

Both ministers are available by appointment. For personal, spiritual, and pastoral care, you may choose whichever minister with whom you would like to meet. Pastoral conversations are confidential, but the content of conversations shared with one minister may be shared with the other. You can email Marta@firstparish.info or Erica@firstparish.info. In case of emergency, please phone the church office: 781-648-3799.

Who does what?

Each minister serves as the ministerial contact for various groups and committees at First Parish as well as supervisor to other staff members. Each year, the ministry team divides among themselves the responsibilities for ministry at First Parish. View the Ministerial Contact List on the next page of this booklet to view this year’s ministerial committee contacts.

What About the Committee on Ministry?

A Committee on Ministry serves as ambassador between Marta and Rev. Erica and the congregation. The Committee on Ministry evaluates and supports Marta and Rev. Erica. You are welcome to give feedback and suggestions to the members of the Committee on Ministry: COM@firstparish.info

MINISTERIAL CONTACT LIST

Committees and staff have individual ministerial contacts.

Rev. Marta Flanagan (*leadminister@firstparish.info*):

Adult Programming:

STAR

Covenant Groups

Ferry Beach

Finance Committee

Human Resources

Music: Director

Accompanist

Music Committee

Office: Office Administrator

Office Associate

Parish Committee:

Parish Executive Committee

Religious Education (RE):

Minister of Religious Education (MRE)

Youth Program Coordinator

RE Committee

Youth-Adult Committee (YAC)

Trustees of Permanent Funds

Ushers

Worship Associates

Rev. Erica Richmond (*parishminister@firstparish.info*):

Lay Ministry:

Prayer Shawl

Wider Network of Care

Leadership Development Committee (LDC)

Membership Committee

Building: Property Committees

Shared Ministry Committee

Social Justice:

Climate Action Working Group (CAWG)

Defending Democracy

Emergent Issues

Indigenous Justice Working Group (IJWG)

Racial Justice Coordinating Committee (RJCC)

Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry

Stewardship Committee

Welcoming Congregation Committee

All other committees and groups may contact either minister.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT FIRST PARISH

Our religious education program (a.k.a. "RE") nurtures the spiritual growth and community life of children (nursery through middle school) and youth (high school). Rev. Stevie Carmody, Minister of Religious Education, oversees this program, alongside the Religious Education Committee (a group of lay volunteers elected by the congregation). To get in touch with Stevie, email mre@firstparish.info . Note that a separate program supports adult religious education, called "STAR"

Infants and Toddlers

We love the sounds of babies and welcome them in our worship services. If you would prefer to worship without your small ones, we have a nursery with caring and experienced staff. People of all ages are also welcome to take advantage of the video screen in the vestry (where we have coffee hour) if they want more space to move around.

Pre-K to Grade 7

Children are encouraged to attend the first 10-15 minutes of worship services and to come to the front of the sanctuary during the Time for All Ages. Children pre-K to grade 7 then go to other parts of the building to attend a variety of RE classes led by trained volunteer teachers. Children grade 3 and younger must be delivered to their classroom and picked up at 11:30 a.m. by an adult.

Our RE program is a place where children learn and discuss liberal religious values to help them navigate life's challenges. Adults and children together discuss the big questions of life and ponder spiritual issues. Children make friends of all ages for life, learn to care about others, and grow spiritually and emotionally. They are encouraged to take the values they learn on Sunday mornings back to their homes, schools, and playgrounds. Our hope is to raise children to act beyond the church doors with open eyes and loving hearts.

Our Whole Lives of Sexuality (OWL) and Coming of Age (Grades 7-8)

These programs help our middle-grades youth deepen their faith, put their values into practice, and think deeply about their place in the world and their aspirations for themselves and our society. OWL is led by a team of trained teachers, while Coming of Age is a rite-of-passage course in which young people work closely with adult mentors. Both programs meet on Sunday evenings.

We do not charge for participation in most of our programs, but there is a fee for OWL and Coming of Age due to additional costs for these special programs. We also ask that families commit to consistent weekly attendance.

Youth Group (Grades 9-12)

Our large and active Youth Group helps high school youth build leadership, form supportive friendships, and serve their wider congregation and community.

Guided by our Youth Group Coordinator, Rose Sawyer-Marsh, the Youth Group is largely youth-led and youth-directed. Youth are elected to a range of leadership positions by their peers.

The Youth Group meets on Sunday evenings, 7:00-8:30 p.m. Each year the youth choose a social action project, alternating between local service projects and a service project to another part of the USA every two years. The Youth Group is open to youth in grades 9-12. Youth must attend a newcomers' orientation to become participants.

For more information

Talk with Minister of Religious Education Stevie Carmody (mre@firstparish.info) or a member of the Religious Education Committee or explore the extensive "education" section of the First Parish website at www.firstparish.info.

If you would like to get more involved with Youth RE

Volunteers (adults and youth) support spiritual growth and community life with the guidance of our Minister of Religious Education, Stevie Carmody.

Since we are a collaborative program, run primarily by volunteers, we encourage adults in our congregation to contribute their time and energy to support and enhance our Sunday morning and evening programs. Here are some ways you can help:

- Assist with a One-Room Sunday School
- Co-teach a grade during one of our three teaching terms
- Offer to be a substitute teacher
- Share your skills as a musician, artist, baker, storyteller, or field trip driver, as often as you can
- Become a mentor for our Coming of Age program
- Lead an intergenerational story in worship
- Volunteer to help in the RE Office with administrative needs

CONTACT: Stevie Carmody, Minister of Religious Education, mre@firstparish.info

Youth Group

(Meets Sunday evenings, 7:00–8:30 p.m.)

Adults assist the Youth Group as advisors (work regularly with the youth), friends (participate in more occasional events), and members of the Youth-Adult Committee (YAC). Adults interested in any of these roles must apply to the Youth Program Coordinator. CONTACT: Rose Sawyer Marsh, Youth Program Coordinator, youthadvisor@firstparish.info

S

Adult Religious Education

STAR programs

Spirit, **T**ransformation, **A**dventure, **R**eflection

enable people within and outside the First Parish community to come together to teach, explore, and share their passions with one another. Please contact STAR at star@firstparish.info if you have an idea for a program you would like to consider offering.

COMMITTEES & GROUPS

OFFICERS, GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The officers and standing committees, in close cooperation with the staff, conduct the basic work of the congregation.

If you might be interested in any of these positions, contact the Leadership Development Committee (LDC) at leadership@firstparish.info and/or talk with the committee's chair(s).

These positions are specified in First Parish's bylaws. Officers and members of standing committees are nominated and elected for three-year terms at the congregation's Annual Meeting each May. The LDC offers a slate of nominees. Nominations, including self-nominations, may also be made from the floor, but people are encouraged to talk with the LDC about their interests. Terms begin and end at Annual Meeting.

At other times of year, the Parish Committee may appoint an individual to a standing committee until the following Annual Meeting at the request of that committee's chair or co-chairs.

The bylaws limit individuals to two consecutive three-year terms on a standing committee unless they receive the approval of the Parish Committee for a third term. Officers and members of the Parish Committee may not serve more than two consecutive three-year terms; they become eligible for re-election at the Annual Meeting a year after their second term ends.

Officers

CLERK: Joanna Pushee (first term ends 2025)

TREASURER: Carolyn Hodges (second term ends 2027)

ASSISTANT TREASURER: Annie Hewitt (term ends 2025)

AUDITOR: Pamela Linov (second term ends 2027)

MODERATOR: David Whitford (first term ends 2026)

Parish Committee (governing board)

Meets the third Tuesday of each month, year-round with additional meetings as needed. Meetings are open to any First Parish member. The Parish Committee is also known as ParCom.

PURPOSE: To serve as the governing body of First Parish: to create parish-wide policy, hold a long-term vision, oversee and empower committees, foster new initiatives and discern priorities among them, prepare and oversee the annual budget, conduct an annual evaluation of the overall ministry of the parish, approve non-called program staff, monitor the overall condition of the physical plant, and speak for the congregation on matters of public concern.

MEMBERSHIP: Clerk, Treasurer, and seven other individuals, all of whom must be First Parish members.

CHAIR: Anne Quaadgras (second term ends 2025)

VICE-CHAIR: John Anderson (first term ends 2026)

TREASURER: Carolyn Hodges (second term ends 2027)

CLERK: Joanna Pushee (first term ends 2025)

Jeff Keffer (first term ends 2026)

Susan Moore (first term ends 2026)

Steve McMullin (zero term ends 2025)

Allan Tosti (second term ends 2027)

Kate Tranquada (first term ends 2027)

CONTACT: Chair and Vice-Chair – *ParishExec@firstparish.info*

NOTE: The Executive Committee of the Parish Committee consists of the Chair, the Vice-Chair, and Marta and Rev. Erica as non-voting *ex officio* members. The Executive Committee is empowered to make a variety of small and/or urgent decisions and brings larger issues to the full Parish Committee.

Denominational Affairs Committee

PURPOSE: To keep the congregation informed of UUA projects and affairs, connect with the larger UU world, and nominate prospective delegates to represent First Parish at the regional and continental levels. *Open to all; currently inactive.*

Finance Committee

(Generally meets at least every other month; and as needed)

PURPOSE: To monitor and oversee the church's financial condition and to prepare a draft of the annual budget for approval by the Parish Committee and the church membership.

MEMBERSHIP: Must be a First Parish member; a numbers background is helpful but not essential.

CHAIR: Lissa McBurney (second term ends 2027)

Sid Slobodkin (first term ends 2025)

EX OFFICIO MEMBER: Carolyn Hodges, Treasurer (second 3-year term ends 2027)

CONTACT: *finance@firstparish.info*

Human Resources Committee

(Generally meets monthly or as needed)

PURPOSE: To support the congregation and its Parish Committee in the arena of human resources, including creating and maintaining employee procedures and policies, job descriptions, clear organizational reporting lines, and hiring and termination practices (e.g., offer letters, exit interviews, and grievance process); to assist the congregation in adhering to fair compensation guidelines and providing competitive benefits in line with our budget; to assist the staff in its process to set annual goals as well as conducting annual performance reviews and feedback; and to serve as counsel to the staff and Parish Committee on the above topics.

MEMBERSHIP: Open to all; human resources experience is helpful but not essential.

CHAIR: Kay Snowden

Sara Galantowicz (first term ends 2027)

Lauren Newton (second term ends 2025)

Kay Snowden (second term ends 2024)

Sara Whitford (first term ends 2025)

CONTACT: *humanresources@firstparish.info*

Leadership Development Committee

(Meets monthly, September–June)

PURPOSE: To encourage and facilitate participation in First Parish committees, support our lay leaders by promoting leadership development throughout our congregation, and nominate individuals to fill vacancies on standing committees and as parish officers prior to the Annual Meeting.

MEMBERSHIP: Open to all; past participation in one or more First Parish committees is ideal.

CHAIR: Kiki Giatis (second term ends 2027)

Marie Meteer (first term ends 2025)

CONTACT: *leadership@firstparish.info*

Membership Committee

PURPOSE: To greet and welcome newcomers to First Parish, to help them learn about our community, and to increase the congregation's awareness of the importance of welcoming newcomers and including them in the life of First Parish. To inspire those who wish to become active and involved members of First Parish and to guide them on the path to membership.

MEMBERSHIP: Open to all.

CHAIR: Amy Anderson (first term ends 2025)

Christian Collins (first term ends 2025)

Maureen Dolan (first term ends 2026)

Lois Fine (first term ends 2027)

Mary McCartney (third term ends 2025)

Gail Page (first term ends 2025)

Jerry Silberman (first term ends 2027)

CONTACT: *membership@firstparish.info*

Music Committee

(Meets the first Thursday of each month, September–June)

PURPOSE: To work closely with the Music Director and accompanist in creating a music program serving the mission of First Parish, to serve as a congregational liaison for music staff and a sounding board for ideas and projects, to be actively involved with equipment and instruments relating to the music program, and to coordinate music events at First Parish.

MEMBERSHIP: Open to all; a musical background is helpful but not essential.

Co-CHAIRS: Robin Baker (first term ends 2026) and
Bob Rowlands (first term ends 2026)

Carol Seitz (first term ends 2026)

Heidi Swartz (first term ends 2027)

CONTACT: Chairs and Music Director - *music@firstparish.info*

Property Committee

(Meets the third Thursday of each month, year-round)

PURPOSE: To maintain and enhance the First Parish buildings and grounds, making the First Parish property an inviting and safe environment with minimal environmental footprint.

MEMBERSHIP: Open to all; new participants welcome.

CHAIR: Greg Ruccio (first term ends 2025)

VICE-CHAIR: Aaron Kitzmiller (second term ends 2027)

David Dreyfus (second term ends 2027)

Stephen McMullin (first term ends 2025)

Mara Prentiss (first term ends 2027)

Jamie Warter (first term ends 2026)

ENERGY MANAGER: Lori Kenschaft (first term ends 2026)

CONTACT: *property@firstparish.info*

Religious Education Committee

PURPOSE: To provide oversight of and support to the RE program at First Parish.

MEMBERSHIP: Open to all.

CHAIR: Betsy Carlton-Gysan (first term ends 2026)

Anthony Fernandez (second term ends 2025)

Janis Fleishman (member/treasurer, first term ends 2026)

Sharon Jacobson (first term ends 2026)

Catherine Kass (first term ends 2027)

Ellen Robie (third term ends 2025)

CONTACT: Chair – re@firstparish.info

Full committee and MRE – recommittee@firstparish.info

Social Justice Committee

(Meets the first Thursday of each month, September–June)

PURPOSE: To support opportunities to live our faith, both within First Parish and in the larger world; to raise funds at the annual Pie Palace, support the social justice working groups (see pages 20-21), plan the annual Shinn and Living Our Faith Services, oversee the Giving First program, and serve as a clearinghouse for social justice initiatives emerging from within and external to our congregation.

MEMBERSHIP: Open to all.

CHAIR: Alan Linov (second term ends 2025)

Melissa Berczuk (first term ends 2026)

Anne Ehlert (first term ends 2026)

Ellen Leigh (first term ends 2025)

Tish Miller (first term ends 2027)

Joanne Pohl (first term ends 2025)

CONTACT: socialjustice@firstparish.info

Stewardship Committee

(Meets as needed)

PURPOSE: To foster a culture of stewardship at First Parish, ensure financial support of First Parish by members and friends via year-long education regarding its financial needs, and oversee the annual pledge campaign.

MEMBERSHIP: Open to all.

CHAIR: Amy Speare (first term ends 2025)

Joel Carlton-Gysan (first term ends 2025)

Maryglenn Vincens (first term ends 2025)

CONTACT: *stewardship@firstparish.info*

Trustees of Trust Funds

PURPOSE: The purpose of the Trust Funds is to ensure the long-term survival of First Parish. The Trustees are fiduciaries for the congregation who are guided by that purpose to manage, invest and distribute the Trust Funds, including both restricted and unrestricted monies. The primary goal for distribution of unrestricted funds is to support the capital needs of First Parish's infrastructure.

MEMBERSHIP: Trustees must be members of First Parish.

CHAIR: Julie Dunn (first term ends 2025)

Bob Fowkes (first term ends 2027)

Marie Meter (first term ends 2026)

Martha Pereli. (second term ends 2027)

Alan Schweitzer (second term ends 2027)

Kay Snowden (first term ends 2026)

CONTACT: *trustees@firstparish.info*

MINISTRY-RELATED COMMITTEES

These committees share with our Ministers, Rev. Marta Flanagan and Rev. Erica Richmond, the ministries of pastoral care, worship, and discernment.

Committee on Ministry

(Meets the third Wednesday of each month, September–June)

PURPOSE: To help interpret the scope of the ministry to the congregation and interpret the scope of the congregation to the Minister, and to conduct an annual evaluation of the ministry with the Parish Committee and make recommendations regarding the ministry.

MEMBERSHIP: Members are invited and appointed by the Parish Committee for a three-year term. They may serve for no more than two consecutive terms.

CHAIR: Tina Silberman (second term ends 2027)

Ebonié Smith-Cooper (second term ends 2027)

Marc Jacobson (first term ends 2025)

Julius Pereli (second term ends 2025)

Andrea Winslow (first term ends 2025)

Jim Ptacek (first term ends 2026)

CONTACT: *com@firstparish.info*

Committee on Shared Ministry

PURPOSE: To oversee and support the work of the Lay Ministry and Worship Associates (see below) and to conduct the application process for those wishing to become Lay Ministers or Worship Associates.

MEMBERSHIP: Members are invited and appointed by the Parish Committee. They serve for a maximum of three two-year terms.

CHAIR: Cathy Modica (second term ends 2026)

Amy Anderson (first term ends 2026)

Annette Sawyer (first term ends 2026)

CONTACT: *sharedministry@firstparish.info*

Lay Ministry

(Meets the 1st Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m.)

PURPOSE: To offer care and pastoral support to those in our congregation in a timely and effective manner, working closely with our Minister.

MEMBERSHIP: Lay Ministers are interviewed and selected by the Committee on Shared Ministry (see above). Any First Parish member who has regularly attended services for at least two years and will commit to a two-year term may apply. If you might be interested in becoming a Lay Minister, contact sharedministry@firstparish.info. Lay Ministers may serve three consecutive two-year terms and must then take at least two years off before reapplying.

CHAIR: Carolyn Carlson (second term ends 2025)

Jeanne Feeley (first term ends spring 2026)

Julie Garry (first term ends spring 2026)

Christa Kelleher (second term ends 2026)

Robbie Rinearson (first term ends 2025)

Greg Ruccio (second term ends 2026)

CONTACT: layministry@firstparish.info

Wider Network of Care

PURPOSE: To offer support to individuals and families in times of need, including food, rides to medical appointments, and other small gifts and services.

MEMBERSHIP: Coordinated by the Lay Ministers. All are welcome to join the network and will be contacted if/when help is needed.

CONTACT: layministry@firstparish.info or sign up on the First Parish website at firstparish.info/lay-ministry/wider-network-of-care/

Prayer Shawl Ministry

PURPOSE: To knit or crochet simple, warm shawls that are distributed by the Lay Ministers as needed.

MEMBERSHIP: New participants welcome.

CONTACT: Barbara Tosti, prayershawl@firstparish.info

Welcoming Congregations Committee

PURPOSE: To reinvigorate and maintain our Welcoming Congregation designation with the UUA, in collaboration with our lay and ordained leadership, with a focus on education, congregational life, and community outreach.

MEMBERSHIP: Appointed by the Parish Committee: Lisa Davis, Ruben Hopwood, Michaela Kirby, Wendy Page, Zoe Stewart and Carolyn White.

CONTACT: *welcoming@firstparish.info*

Worship Associates

(Meets on the 2nd Wednesday each month, September–June)

PURPOSE: Worship Associates help shape worship services that serve the spiritual needs of the congregation and run smoothly on a practical level, both during the program year (September–June) and during the summer (when lay people lead services). The Worship Associates work closely with the Minister and coordinate with other church staff and volunteers as needed.

MEMBERSHIP: Worship Associates are interviewed and selected by the Committee on Shared Ministry. Any First Parish member who has regularly attended services for at least two years and will commit to a two-year term may apply. If you might be interested in becoming a Worship Associate, contact *sharedministry@firstparish.info*. Worship Associates may serve three consecutive two-year terms and must then take at least two years off before reapplying.

CHAIR: Loren Gomez (second term ends 2026)

Mary Breen (first term ends 2026)

Bill Licea-Kane (second term ends 2026)

Lillian Povey (first term ends 2026)

David Whitford (second term ends 2025)

CONTACT: *worshipassociates@firstparish.info*

SPIRITUAL GROWTH & MUTUAL SUPPORT

These groups help adults deepen their spiritual journeys and their relationships with others. All of them welcome new participants who share their interests.

The Alliance

Alliance events are typically on Friday evenings; Board meetings are held monthly by Zoom on a date to be decided; The Alliance annual business meeting is held in May

PURPOSE: To provide occasions for First Parish women to meet for fellowship, to deepen their intellectual and spiritual lives through programs that explore topics of value to women, and to engage in service projects. Alliance Giving Plans are reviewed by members every 3 years. The Alliance provides financial support to local, regional, national, and global charities that help women and families through difficult transitions as well as to First Parish, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, and the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation.

MEMBERSHIP: Open to those who identify as women at First Parish; new participants are welcome. Alliance programs are open to all at First Parish regardless of gender.

CONTACT: Andrea Winslow (President), Nina Duncan (Vice-president), Robbie Rinearson (Secretary), Kay Snowden (Treasurer), Sharen Leonard (Communications),
alliance@firstparish.info

Covenant Groups

(Meet monthly throughout the year)

Purpose: To provide an opportunity to get to know other people at a deeper level, in a consistent small group, while discussing topics that explore our spiritual paths as informed by life experience.

MEMBERSHIP: Recruitment of new members occurs each fall, with groups beginning in January. Groups are limited to nine members, who are expected to commit to attend for a year. Each covenant group has a convener and the conveners meet with each other monthly.

CONTACT: *covenantgroups@firstparish.info*

Diversity Book Club

(Meets the third Tuesday of alternate months throughout the year)

CONTACT: diversitybookclub@firstparish.info

Grief Support Group

(Meets the fourth Tuesday of each month, except July and August)

A drop-in Zoom session led by our lay ministers. Bring your memories, your heartache, your whole self.

CONTACT: layministry@firstparish.info

Jewish Connections

PURPOSE: To bring opportunities for Jewish learning, ritual, celebration, gatherings, and perspectives to our community through worship, study, and conversation. We host a potluck Seder for Passover, a Latke Party for Hanukkah, and Tashlich for Rosh Hashanah most years.

MEMBERSHIP: New participants welcome.

CONTACT: jewishconnections@firstparish.info

Lectio Divina

(Meets online Tue., 7–8 a.m., Wed., 9–10 a.m. & Thu., 8–9 a.m.)

PURPOSE: To engage in a spiritual practice of reading and listening, lingering with, and sharing personal responses to selected biblical texts. Diverse responses to the text provide new insights and help participants develop their spiritual lives and set intentions for their daily lives.

MEMBERSHIP: Sign up to participate Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday online at firstparish.info/adult-education/lectio-divina.

CONTACT: Rev. Marta Flanagan, leadminister@firstparish.info

Meditation Group

(Drop-in group meets online Sundays 9–9:30 a.m., and in-person Mondays, 6–6:30 p.m. for silent meditation)

PURPOSE: To provide opportunities for Buddhist meditation, support, and discussion.

MEMBERSHIP: Use the email below to receive a participation link on Zoom

CONTACT: Monique Chaplain, meditation@firstparish.info

Men's Group

(This group meets online every other Sunday at 7pm)

PURPOSE: To offer a place of fellowship, encouragement, and creative connection for First Parish men of all ages and backgrounds.

MEMBERSHIP: Open to all interested men; new participants welcome.

CONTACT: David Dreyfus, mensgroup@firstparish.info

Older Men's Group Thursday Lunch

(This group meets online every other Thursday at noon)

PURPOSE: To offer a monthly fellowship gathering for older men, aimed at reinforcing camaraderie and discussing topics of general interest.

MEMBERSHIP: Open to all older men; new participants welcome. Email the address below for the link to participate

CONTACT: oldermen@firstparish.info

Partnership Church Committee

PURPOSE: To nurture and strengthen the ongoing relationship between First Parish and the Unitarian church in Gagy, Transylvania, Romania, via frequent communication, cultural exchanges, and visits.

MEMBERSHIP: New participants welcome; currently inactive.

CONTACT: Michael Friedman, partnerchurch@firstparish.info

Spirit Talks

(Meets every Monday throughout the year)

Weekly discussions provide an opportunity for a small group to reflect together on a spiritual theme inspired by a different quote each week.

CONTACT: spirittalk@firstparish.info

STAR (Adult Religious Education)

PURPOSE: To offer adult education programs that help people within and outside the First Parish community come together to teach, explore, and share their passions with one another.

MEMBERSHIP: New program leaders and STAR organizers are welcome. Please contact STAR if you have an idea for a program you would like to consider offering.

CONTACTS: *star@firstparish.info*

Transition to Retirement Group

Wherever you are in the process of retiring (planning for it, have a date, already retired), join this drop-in group that focuses on the emotional aspects of the retirement process (not the financial).

CONTACT: Lay Ministry *layministry@firstparish.info*

Wednesday Evening Chapel

(Meets Wednesdays at 9pm, September through January)

Weekly evening chapel gatherings throughout the winter. It is a 20-25 minute gathering complete with music, meditation, readings, and sharing. Come every week or come a handful of times. We would love to see you.

MEMBERSHIP: New participants welcome.

CONTACT: Rev. Erica Richmond, *parishminister@firstparish.info*

Women's Book Group

(Meets the First Thursday of each month, 7:15–9 p.m.)

PURPOSE: To read and discuss interesting books with other First Parish women.

MEMBERSHIP: Open to all women; new participants welcome.

CONTACT: Mary Cummings (Coordinator),
womensbookgroup@firstparish.info

Women Aging Well

(Meets online or in person, the 4th Thurs. of each month, 10 a.m.–noon)

Purpose: To foster engagement and build community among women over fifty who wish to explore themes related to planning and consciously living out our later years. Some meetings have guest speakers; others include small-group or large-group conversations.

MEMBERSHIP: Open to all women over fifty; new participants welcome. CONTACT: agingwell@firstparish.info

MUSIC

Singers and instrumentalists – members of our congregation – provide music at most Sunday services under the direction of our Music Director, Daniel Parsley.

New singers and instrumentalists are welcome! You may email Daniel at daniel.parsley@firstparish.info

Choir

(Rehearses Thursdays, 7-8 p.m., and many Sundays, 9 a.m., September–June)

PURPOSE: The Choir, our church's most active musical ensemble, sings during most Sunday services during the program year.

MEMBERSHIP: New choir members, grade 8 through adult, are welcome throughout the year. Please also contact Daniel if you would like to sing occasionally for special services.

CONTACT: Daniel Parsley, Music Director,
daniel.parsley@firstparish.info

Bell Choir

(Rehearses Thursdays, 8pm-9pm)

PURPOSE: To provide musical opportunities for members interested in hand chime ringing. The ensemble performs at 2-3 services a year. Open to all interested in learning about bell ringing. Some musical experience is suggested.

CONTACT: ringers@firstparish.info

C Winds

C Winds is a flute ensemble for intermediate to advanced level flutists with good music reading skills. They play on services 2-3 times a year and occasionally perform with piano, cello or bass. Contact Robin Baker at music@firstparish.info for more information.

Instrumentalists

PURPOSE: To provide instrumental music during worship services, and to give instrumentalists in our congregation an opportunity to share their talents with the First Parish community. Instrumentalists play in a variety of large and small groups, depending on their interests.

MEMBERSHIP: New instrumentalists, grade 8 through adult, are welcome throughout the year. Please contact Music Director Daniel Parsley, if you are interested in contributing to a service with instrumental music.

CONTACT: Daniel Parsley, Music Director,
daniel.parsley@firstparish.info

SOCIAL JUSTICE PROGRAM

Social Justice Committee

The Social Justice Committee

- Convenes First Parish social justice leaders to coordinate and plan the program
- Promotes awareness and celebration of social justice efforts at First Parish
- Facilitates task groups to conduct components of our program that have well-defined processes and few meetings
- Evaluates proposals to initiate new self-directed working groups
- Manages funding for some working group activities and special programs
- Serves as initial point of contact for outside groups seeking support and coordination
- Organizes and facilitates occasional actions and events that are outside the scope of any current working group

New participants are welcome to join any of these working groups. Working groups are created by groups of people who share an interest.

If you have a group of people who want to work together on another issue, contact the SJC at socialjustice@firstparish.info.

ArCS Cluster of Refugee Immigration Ministry

The ArCS Cluster mobilizes local volunteers who want to make a difference in the lives of refugees in Arlington, Cambridge, Somerville and nearby communities. ArCS provides practical help (including housing, access to health care, household goods, etc.), emotional support and financial assistance to individuals and families throughout their journey to establish themselves in a new community. See our website www.ArCSCluster.org.

CONTACT: Eric Segal, arcscluster@firstparish.info

Blood Drives

(Held six times a year)

Purpose: To coordinate six blood drives each year and to educate the community about the importance of donation.

CONTACT: John Hodges, blooddrive@firstparish.info

Climate Action Working Group

This group takes local actions supporting global transformation of economies to clean energy sources, while eliminating fossil fuel usage that damages the climate system and has an unjust, disproportionate impact on communities that have never been heavy users of fossil fuels. CAWG promotes efforts in Arlington and nearby communities, Massachusetts legislation and executive action, and leads the effort to shift First Parish facilities to clean energy.

CONTACT: Alan Linov, climateaction@firstparish.info

Defending Democracy Working Group

This working group focuses on equity, fairness, and justice issues in Massachusetts, guided by UU Principles related to justice and the democratic process. The group participates in efforts (with UU the Vote) to oppose and overcome discriminatory barriers to voting, and supports issues like the Massachusetts Fair Share Amendment, a ballot question on taxing income over \$1 million/year to produce funding for public education and transportation. This group has begun organizing to enhance civics education in Massachusetts.

CONTACT: Maggie Carey, defendingdemocracy@firstparish.info

Emergent Issues Task Group

This task group helps the congregation recognize and respond to social justice issues as they arise or they take renewed prominence. Group members manage the public witness banners on the meetinghouse lawn. The group also organizes and facilitate others in organizing public actions, sometimes rapidly, including vigils and protests that respond to violations of human rights and attacks on marginalized people.

CONTACT: Alan Linov, emergentissues@firstparish.info

Giving First Task Group

Giving First is the name of the program in which half of our Sunday service offerings are contributed to nonprofit organizations doing social justice work. At the end of every calendar year, this task group solicits nominations of beneficiary organizations from members of our congregation, selects a monthly slate for the coming year, and guides nominators in getting information about their organization to the people who handle Sunday announcements and send the collected money.

CONTACT: Joanne Pohl, givingfirst@firstparish.info

Indigenous Justice Working Group

(Meets the fourth Monday of each month at 8pm, September-June)

Indigenous Justice Working Group explores the grave injustices experienced by the Indigenous people of Massachusetts, from being displaced from their homes centuries ago to the vast health and social inequities today. Members seek truth and raise ideas about how we might learn about, acknowledge, and confront these injustices to heal and move forward together toward a more just future.

CONTACT: Ellen Leigh IJWG@firstparish.info

Pie Palace Task Group

This task group plans and leads the annual Pie Palace, a fun, community-wide event where pie slices are sold to happy customers on Arlington Town Day while raising funds for the social justice program. Task group members contact pie bakers, recruit workers for the booth, and buy supplies.

CONTACT: Maureen Dolan, PiePalace@firstparish.info

Racial Justice Coordinating Committee

RJCC identifies and supports activities that promote racial justice within the First Parish community and in the broader world, including providing education on race consciousness, microaggressions, cultural (mis)appropriations, institutional racism, and white supremacy. RJCC also leads in bearing witness on present-day events (through meetinghouse lawn banners and vigils), leads book discussions from antiracist authors and thought leaders, advocates for civilian participation in handling police complaints, works with ministers on racial justice projects, and manages a racial justice library.

MEMBERSHIP: Appointed by the Parish Committee: Lois Fine, Sara Whitford, Maggie Carey, Maryglenn Vincens and Tom Estabrook.

CONTACT: Maggie Carey, racialjustice@firstparish.info

Social Justice Worship Task Group

Each year, one Sunday is devoted to the social-justice-themed Shinn Service, with a guest providing the sermon related to their own social justice work and interests. Another Sunday is devoted to the Living Our Faith service, at which three members of our congregation speak briefly about how their faith relates to their work for social justice. This task group selects speakers and plans introductory remarks for these services.

CONTACT: Joanne Pohl, SJworship@firstparish.info

UU Urban Ministry

First Parish is a long-time member of The UU Urban Ministry, a social justice organization in Roxbury with a mission to work across race and place to dismantle racism and white supremacy culture and to advance racial, social, and economic justice. Its programs currently focus on domestic violence services, Roxbury youth, and artists of color. Engagement offerings may include guided area tours, educational racial-justice webinars and other initiatives to build awareness and connection to the Roxbury community.

CONTACT: Lois Fine urbanministry@firstparish.info

PRACTICAL GROUPS

These groups do useful, practical things, and most have few or no meetings. New volunteers are always welcome!

Art Exhibition Committee

PURPOSE: To coordinate art shows in the Parlor and Narthex display window, and to host receptions.

MEMBERSHIP: New participants welcome.

CONTACT: Steph Miserlis, Jim Ptacek, Marilyn Downs, Michaela Kirby, Peggy Gardiner, Carol Saunders Chamberlain, at artshow@firstparish.info

Ferry Beach Retreat Planners

(Meets regularly in September, intermittently the rest of the year)

PURPOSE: To plan the annual family retreat held at the Ferry Beach Retreat in Saco, Maine, and to establish policies and practices as needed.

MEMBERSHIP: New participants welcome, including Youth Group members.

CONTACT: ferrybeach@firstparish.info

Garden Tenders

(as needed – changes with the seasons, obviously!)

Purpose: To beautify First Parish's grounds by watering and tending the gardens.

MEMBERSHIP: New participants welcome, of any age.

CONTACT: gardens@firstparish.info

Harvest Moon Fair Committee

(Meets weekly in October and November, intermittently the rest of the year)

Purpose: To organize and run the annual Harvest Moon Fair, First Parish's largest fundraiser, which occurs on the Saturday before Thanksgiving.

MEMBERSHIP: New participants welcome. Dozens of volunteers are needed to prepare for, run, and clean up after the Fair, and there's a place for everyone.

CONTACT: Aaron Kitzmiller, *fair@firstparish.info*

Man-Made Chili

(Cooks on and before Arlington's Town Day each September)

Purpose: To raise spirits and money by making chili for Arlington's Town Day.

MEMBERSHIP: All he/him/hises welcome.

CONTACT: Aaron Kitzmiller and Greg Ruccio, *manmadechili@firstparish.info*

Memorial Garden Committee

PURPOSE: To oversee the Memorial Garden and Remembrance Corner.

MEMBERSHIP: New members welcome.

CONTACT: Barbara Tosti, *memorialgarden@firstparish.info*

Property Helper Bees

PURPOSE: Helper Bees assist the Property Committee with special projects, such as raking leaves or fixing sanctuary chairs, without joining the Property Committee. Look for announcements of special shared fall and spring work days.

MEMBERSHIP: New participants welcome.

CONTACT: *property@firstparish.info*

Safer Congregations Committee

(Meets as needed)

PURPOSE: To make thoughtful decisions about the participation of an individual in First Parish activities when there is a

substantive reason to consider whether that individual might pose a threat to others.

MEMBERSHIP: Appointed by the Parish Committee, with Rev. Marta Flanagan as an *ex officio* member.

CONTACT: *SCC@firstparish.info*

Safety Committee

(Meets the fourth Monday of the month, September–June)

PURPOSE: To develop and monitor safe practices and emergency protocols in our building.

MEMBERSHIP: New participants welcome.

CONTACT: *safety@firstparish.info*

Ushers

(Sundays, 9 a.m.–noon)

PURPOSE: To warmly welcome attendees on Sunday mornings, provide information to attendees, and help the service flow in a smooth, safe, and orderly fashion.

MEMBERSHIP: Open to all, grade 5 through adult. Ushers arrive early to help set up for Sunday services, greet and share information with attendees, assist the Worship Associates and Ministers as needed, and keep an eye out for safety. Ushers choose their own schedules, typically once a month. If you would like to find out more about joining the ushers, please talk with or email the usher coordinator.

CONTACT: Kate Tranquada, *ushercoordinator@firstparish.info*

Tech Team

PURPOSE: To help the First Parish provide hybrid worship. Team members facilitate Zoom during Sunday Worship, including operating the sanctuary cameras during worship. They can be available to help individuals or groups feel more comfortable using Zoom and other technologies and can provide training sessions to the community

MEMBERSHIP: New participants welcome.

CONTACT: *TechHelp@firstparish.info*

PRACTICAL TIPS ON HOW TO DO THINGS

What is the Parish Committee and how do I contact it?

The Parish Committee (a.k.a. ParCom) is First Parish's governing board. Email questions, suggestions, or requests to ParishExec@firstparish.info. Meetings are generally on the third Tuesday of each month, 7-9 p.m., and are open to all First Parish members.

How do I make an appointment with Marta or Rev. Erica?

Email her directly. Rev. Marta Morris Flanagan at leadminister@firstparish.info or Rev. Erica Richmond at parishminister@firstparish.info

What is Realm?

Realm is First Parish's on-line directory/database and a very helpful resource. Email realm@firstparish.info to request an invitation to join Realm or get help using it.

How do I contribute a listing to the weekly E-Bulletin or the Sunday Teaser?

Fill out the form at www.firstparish.info/publish, and submit by Wednesday noon.

How do I request a spoken announcement during the Sunday service?

Email it to announce@firstparish.info by Wednesday noon.

How do I request a table during coffee hour?

Email table@firstparish.info by Wednesday noon.

How do I book a Zoom link/space for a First Parish meeting/event and list it on the First Parish calendar?

Fill out the form at www.firstparish.info/calendar

How do I submit an article to the Spire?

Email it to spire@firstparish.info by midnight on the last Sunday of the month.

What do I do if someone's behavior seems dangerous?

If you feel unsafe while in the building, dial 911 immediately. Or you may talk with any staff member.

What if what I want to do isn't listed here?

Email office@firstparish.info, or call 781-648-3799.