




Join These Special Seasonal Events

See p. 5 for more details



Pop-Up Holiday Shop

Sat. Dec. 2, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Shop for Fair Trade handmade gifts, and let the kids buy for family and friends in The Kids' Shop.

Community Open House and Carol Sing

Sun. Dec. 3, 2 - 5 p.m.

All are welcome to the Carol Sing in front of First Parish at 4:30 p.m., part of the Wayland Community Open House that includes activities at the Wayland Historical Society Museum (Grout Heard House), Wayland Depot, Wayland Free Public Library, and First Parish. Santa will join us!

Music Sunday: *Carols and Lullabies, Christmas in the Southwest*

Sunday, Dec. 10, 10 a.m.

Enjoy Conrad Susa's joyful *Carols and Lullabies*, presented by the First Parish Choir with guitar, marimba and harp, under the direction of Music Director Polly Oliver.

Blue Christmas Vespers Service

Monday, Dec. 18, 7:00 p.m., Sunroom

A time to honor those not with us, or feelings of sadness during the holiday season.

Winter Solstice Gathering

Thursday, Dec. 21, 6:45 p.m., by the Sheds

Take a moment during the busy holiday season to celebrate the turning of the seasons.

Christmas Eve Services

Sunday, Dec. 24, 4 p.m. and 7 p.m.

The family service at 4 p.m. includes a Nativity pageant, and at the 7 p.m. Candlelight Service, carols and candles usher in Christmas Eve.



Welcome to First Parish

We are a Unitarian Universalist congregation that affirms human dignity, community action, freedom of religious thought, and the power of love. We welcome everyone!

Our Mission

To Build Community

by forging caring connections and supporting one another through the joys, sorrows, and mysteries of life.

To Search for Meaning

by creating opportunities for all ages to explore values and principles that orient and guide us through life.

To Deepen Our Spirituality

by gathering to share words and music, by nurturing private moments of reflection, and by cultivating reverence.

To Make a Better World

by engaging in compassionate service and promoting social justice.

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How to Connect With First Parish

Attend Sunday services and other events: Come in person, or when available, attend via Zoom. Zoom links to Sunday services and some other events are in the weekly eblast.

Sign up for news: [Visit our website](#) to see what's new and sign up for our newsletter and eblast.

Find us on social media: We have a public Facebook page and a private Facebook group. Contact the office to join. We are also on Instagram.

Join our email listserv: Our congregation is a friendly and useful resource for recommendations ranging from plumbers to travel, and other non-church-related topics. Contact the office or Chauncey Wilson, listserv moderator, to sign up.

A Month of (Mostly) Sundays
 The morning worship service begins at 10 a.m.

December 3
 "Living in Mystery"
 Rev. Deborah Bennett

December 10
 Music Sunday
 Conrad Susa's "Carols and Lullabies: Christmas in the Southwest"
 "The Sound of Harmony"
 Rev. Deborah Bennett

December 17
 "From Darkness to Light"
 Rev. Deborah Bennett

Monday, December 18, 7 p.m.
 Blue Christmas Vespers Service
 Rev. Deborah Bennett

Thursday, December 21, 6:45 p.m.
 Solstice Gathering
 Laurel Whitehouse, Rev. Deborah Bennett

Note that there is no morning service on Sunday, December 24

December 24, 4:00 p.m.
 Christmas Eve Family Service with Pageant

December 24, 7:00 p.m.
 Candlelight Christmas Eve Service
 Rev. Deborah Bennett

December 31
 Joint Service, 10 a.m.
 At First Parish of Sudbury

December Theme:

The Gift of Mystery

Our Offering Gift
Family Promise
MetroWest

On Christmas Eve, the full Offering from both services will be donated to [Family Promise MetroWest](#), which works to transform the lives of families with children that are facing homelessness by mobilizing a diverse community to provide shelter, education, and comprehensive support.

December's Lay Minister

December's Lay Minister is Ted Barnes. Contact Ted if you need a ride, a meal, a friendly, confidential visit, or a chat. We don't publish parishioner contact information in the Unitarian. Contact [the office](#) if you'd like to reach the Lay Minister or need the password to the Parish Directory. The link to the Directory is available on our website [members' page](#).

What If It Snows?



photo by Judy Canty

If snow or icy conditions force us to cancel Sunday service or other events, find out here:

- > Our website, www.uuwayland.org
- > In a special eblast
- > In the UUSocial email group
- > In our private Facebook group

Stay warm and safe this winter!



Balancing the Pressures and the Joys of the Holidays

Although it appears to be misattributed to the existentialist philosopher, Søren Kierkegaard, this famous quote holds many truths for me: “Life is not a problem to be solved, but a mystery to be experienced.” As we enter the holiday season perhaps this quote can serve us well.

Each year I find myself trying to balance the “problems” of the holidays. I work hard to navigate my own and others’ needs, hopes and desires to have this be a special time to connect with family and friends and express love and appreciation. Each year I think, “This year I am going to make all my friends homemade gifts,” or “This year I’m going to make sure the kids and their partners get something they weren’t expecting but will be thrilled to receive,” or “This year I will get to the Nutcracker,” or “This year I’m going to make sure to not eat too many sweets while also making special desserts everyone loves.” You get the picture. Some years I “succeed” a little and some years, not so much.

But regardless of how it all turns out I find it fascinating how much pressure I can put on myself during this time of year. Can anyone relate? And though it is a potential source of inspiration, I have to say, social media is my nemesis in December. I mean, who really has time and resources and energy to do all that fancy baking and multi-layered wrapping and fitting into all those beautiful clothes while sweating it out in the kitchen? If I use those reels as my benchmark my stress surely rises.

Luckily First Parish is NOT an Instagram post — although we do post on Instagram and Facebook — check it out [here](#) and [here](#). One of the things I love about being part of a religious community open to mystery is that I feel we do our best to offer each other the space to not be “picture perfect” all the time or have “the” answer all the time. Instead we invite each other to hold the questions of life without the need to find the one “right” answer or show up as some perfect version of ourselves. Truly, for me, the attraction to embracing a liberal religion is precisely that we acknowledge that life is not a

problem to be solved but a beautiful (though sometimes challenging) mystery to be lived.

This month we will light the advent candles, honor the light of the menorah, celebrate the light of the Yule log, ponder the mystery of our lives, hear an amazing Sunday of choir music, hold each other tenderly in our sorrows, celebrate the Christmas story with our children’s pageant and share the mystery by passing the light on Christmas Eve. I hope you are able to join us often this month whether in person or on-line.

In Light and With Love,
Rev. Deborah

One of the things I love about being part of a religious community open to mystery is that I feel we do our best to offer each other the space to not be “picture perfect” all the time or have “the” answer all the time.

Two Easy Ways To Support Sunday Worship

Join the Coffee Hour Host Gang! A very easy and infrequent ask for your help in serving Coffee Hour following Sunday services. Instructions and assistance happily provided for “first timers.” An easy way to contribute to our beloved weekly gatherings. Please sign up on the sheets in the Vestry or contact John Thompson. Many thanks to all who help!



Sign Up For Sanctuary Flowers

Flowers enhance our Sunday service and give you the opportunity to celebrate or remember someone. Virtually all Sundays in 2024 are available. Plan ahead to reserve your date! [Sign up here](#), email or call Suzanne Woodruff or Rita Anderson, or sign up on the paper schedule in the Vestry. Thank you!



Holiday Pop-Up Sale + Kids' Shop

Dec. 2 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.



The Uganda Project will sell crafts like these made at the Kampala School for the Physically Handicapped, where First Parish has shipped craft supplies.

First Parish in Wayland's Holiday Sale will feature items from our own Fair Trade Project and the Uganda Project, handmade items from other nonprofits, and gently used holiday décor. The Kids' Shop will offer low-cost items where kids can shop for family and friends.

At least four organizations supporting marginalized women and children will be featured, including:

- [Project Have Hope](#) from Uganda
- [Under the Same Moon](#) from Guatemala
- [Rift Valley Women's Group](#) from Tanzania
- [Sewing Seeds for Hope](#), for Afghan Women artisans

Community Carol Sing

Sunday, December 3 at 4:30 p.m.
Front steps of First Parish in Wayland

Rev. Deborah Bennett will host the festivities. Participants include members of the Sudbury Valley New Horizons Band under the direction of Diane Muffitt. Maddie Sifantus, former director of the Golden Tones, will lead the singing.



Word on the street is that Santa will make an appearance! All are welcome to come inside for cocoa and cookies after the Carol Sing.

Winter Solstice Gathering

Thursday, Dec. 21, 6:45 p.m.



Everyone of every age is invited to gather outside around a fire pit near the sheds. There will be a brief ritual reflecting on the meaning of solstice and the value of darkness, pause and renewal in our overcrowded lives, and ending with a blessing for the coming winter. Then we will toast marshmallows

and enjoy hot beverages. (If we cannot be outside due to weather we will gather in the Vestry instead.)

Music Sunday Carols and Lullabies December 10, 10 a.m.



Join us for the choir's performance of Conrad Susa's *Carols and Lullabies: Christmas in the Southwest*, under the direction of First Parish Music Director Polly Oliver. The voices are supported by harp, marimba and guitar, which combine to create a beautiful sound, in turns soothing and energetic. The work explores the Christ child's birth through Spanish-language carols and rhythms.

Blue Christmas Vespers Service

Monday, Dec. 18, 7:00 p.m.

In addition to the joyous mystery that the December holidays can usher in, this can also be an especially challenging time for some. December can be a time when we are more acutely aware of those that will not be with us to enjoy meals and gifts and lights. The holiday season can be a time of sadness and quiet reflection.



If you would appreciate a time to honor those who are not with you this holiday (for whatever reason) or if this is just a time where you find yourself feeling down or extra quiet, please join Rev. Deborah for a special Blue Christmas Vespers service.

If you need a ride, please email layministers@uwayland.org or Rev. Deborah at dbennett@uwayland.org

Assessing Our Areas of Strength and Need

After a very busy start to the church year, the Parish Committee settled into a period of reflection, turning our attention to a draft “Systems Assessment” that Rev. Deborah presented at our November meeting. The assessment covers a lot of territory—everything from our governance model to the sign in front of the Meetinghouse. The assessment, which is based on a survey of parish leadership and staff as well as Rev. Deborah’s own observations, seeks to answer three questions:

- “What are we doing well as a congregation?”
- “Where are we falling short?” and
- “How can we address the shortcomings in this interim period?”

We considered a lot of things in the meeting, for example:

- How does a congregation “share ministry”?
- Can we design services that appeal to a wide range of beliefs?
- Why are there so few kids at First Parish?
- Whatever happened to the Community Life Committee?
- Should the choir sing from the front of the church?
- Should the Parish Committee have a bicameral structure?
- Should we redesign the website?
- What social justice programs are we really committed to?
- How do we attract new members?

These are not idle questions. They are signs that we are actively engaging in “interim work.”

Did I mention it was a lot? Yes, it was a lot (and this is just the tip of the iceberg). But these are not idle questions. They are signs that we are actively engaging in “interim work.” They are part of our effort to (1) take stock of ourselves and (2) clean up the systems that need attention before we enter into search for our next minister.

You will be hearing more about this internal review as Rev. Deborah finalizes the assessment and the congregation chooses a Ministerial Search Committee in the winter and spring.

2023–2024 Parish Committee: Lea Anderson (Chair), Chris Cullen (Treasurer), Larry Green, Jim Grumbach, Barbara Heffner, Nan Jahnke (Clerk), Nathalie Thompson (Vice Chair), Laurel Whitehouse, Jada Williams, Jay Woodruff

In the meantime, take a look around and ask yourself: What do we do well here? Where are we falling short? How can I help?

Happy holidays, everyone, and best wishes for the New Year,

Nan Jahnke for the Parish Committee



Happy Holidays to All!

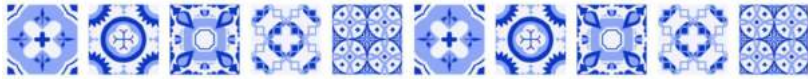
Happy holidays to the First Parish Community!

Special greetings and thanks go to the First Parish staff, whose commitment, “can-do” spirit, generosity, and warmth provide guidance and support for all we do.

We are all part of the fabric of First Parish, contributing in many ways both seen and unseen. Thanks to every member of our community for all you bring and give to First Parish.

May your holiday season be full of love.

Auction 2024: Mediterranean Magic!



Our annual auction is slated for Saturday, March 23, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. Our theme, Mediterranean Magic, celebrates the cuisine and customs of the Mediterranean region.

Your auction team is in planning mode. There will be stays at vacation homes, dinners hosted by First Parish folks, gift certificates, creative outings, handcrafted items, gift baskets, and more.

We'd welcome new ideas for auction items and of course we'd welcome more volunteers. If you are short on time, some of the tasks require just a few hours of your time. You could email five restaurants or local stores to request donated gift certificates or simply help with setup on Friday, March 22.

Finally, we would like to emphasize that the Auction is first and foremost a fun party - an opportunity for folks to gather over drinks, food and festivities. And all the funds from your purchases, large and small, go directly to support the important work of First Parish as we continue to serve our congregation and the larger community surrounding us. Whether you plan to bid on anything or not, please plan to join us for a lively evening!

Wow! We Undecorated the Tree ... Again

There were 120 red and green paper candy canes hanging on the tree. And three weeks later there were none.

The generosity of our First Parish community shines brightly. There are Target gift cards totaling nearly \$3,000. There are bags filled with games, Legos, blocks, dolls, puzzles, crafts, books, hats, gloves, PJs, socks, toiletries, and rolls and rolls of toilet paper and wrapping paper.

A huge thank you for your support from the moms and kids who have survived domestic violence – both the material support and the emotional boost of knowing that people care. Way to Go!

Linda Collins, Lois Doerr, Peggy Holland, Marney Ives, Suzanne Reitz, Pat Sims, Suzanne Woodruff and honorary members Steve Collins and Keith Sims, and the Alliance Board: Penny Beer and Penny Wilson.



Calling All Yard Sale Enthusiasts! Sun., Jan. 21, 11:30 a.m.

Join us on Sunday, January 21 after service as we roll up our sleeves and brainstorm this year's Yard Sale, set for Saturday, June 1. Did you love the camaraderie of Rummage? Convivial lunches? Recycling and repurposing goods? Grabbing an amazing bargain? Working together and deepening connections with other FP people? (We'll have all of those!) Did you cut your Rummage teeth sorting vast piles of women's clothing in the Vestry? Sell goods in the driveway outside the sheds in baking heat or a snowstorm? Wind up with an aching back from all the lifting and schlepping? (We'll never do those things again!)



Lois Doerr sold baked goods at last year's Yard Sale.

This is Rummage re-envisioned. We had a well-attended and lively discussion in October, which generated some great ideas for the future (food trucks...musical entertainment...more pop-up sales!). This year we'd like to reach out to the wider community and invite their attendance and perhaps participation. (We already have the Wayland Historical Society, the Uganda Project, and Fair Trade sales.) Do you have ideas – and most especially – energy to make the Yard Sale a great new FPW tradition? Please join us! If you have ideas and can't attend, contact Suzanne Tiberii or Kathie Schmidt.

Let's Talk About Gender: A Conversation Circle

It was with deep gratitude that we were able to welcome Jenn Stephens and Jamie Blair, two transgender women, to lead our worship service on Nov. 19. Their willingness to share their stories and their openness to answer any questions was truly inspiring. Now let's keep the conversation going.

This year Rev. Deborah and Kate Holland are launching a series of conversations called, "Let's Talk About...". In these conversations you will be given the opportunity to share and listen, discuss, maybe wrestle with, and ultimately grow through exploring nuanced topics that can be challenging.

To continue your own exploration, please check out the FAQ below and explore some of the on-line resources.

What is Gender?

According to the World Health Organization: Sex refers to "the different biological and physiological characteristics of males and females, such as reproductive organs, chromosomes, hormones, etc."

Gender refers to "the socially constructed characteristics of women and men – such as norms, roles and relationships of and between groups of women and men. It varies from society to society and can be changed... When individuals or groups do not "fit" established gender norms they often face stigma, discriminatory practices, or social exclusion – all of which adversely affect health."

What does it mean to be transgender?

Transgender, or trans, is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity is different from the sex assigned to them at birth. Although the word "transgender" and our modern

definition of it only came into use in the late 20th century, [people who would fit under this definition have existed in every culture throughout recorded history.](#)

Trying to change a person's gender identity is no more successful than trying to change a person's sexual orientation — it doesn't work. So most transgender people seek to bring their bodies into alignment with their gender identity. This is called transition.

As part of the transition process, many transgender people are prescribed hormones by their doctors to change their bodies. Some undergo surgeries as well. But not all transgender people can or will take those steps, and it's important to know that being transgender is not dependent upon medical procedures.

Transgender is an adjective and should never be used as a noun. For example, rather than saying "Max is a transgender," say "Max is a transgender person" or "Max is a transgender man." And transgender never needs an "-ed" at the end.

Cisgender, or cis, describes people whose gender identity or expression aligns with traits typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.

What are gender identity and gender expression?

Gender identity refers to one's innermost concept of self as a man, a woman, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and

Please join us...
 ...for our first conversation circle:
 "Let's Talk About Gender"
 Tuesday, Dec. 12, 7 p.m.
 at First Parish
 or
 Wed., Dec. 13, 7 p.m. on
 Zoom
 Sign Up [HERE](#) for in-person circle and [HERE](#) for the Zoom circle.

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Gender, continued from p. 8

what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.

Gender expression refers to the external appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, body characteristics or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.

How is sexual orientation different than gender identity?

A person's gender identity and expression are not the same as their sexuality. Sexual orientation describes a person's enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to another person while gender identity describes a person's internal, **personal sense** of being a man or a woman, or someone outside of the gender binary.

Simply put: sexual orientation is about who you are attracted to and fall in love with; gender identity is about who you are.

Like everyone else, transgender people have a sexual orientation. Transgender people may be straight, lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer. For example, a person who transitions from male to female and is attracted solely to men would typically identify as a straight woman. A person who transitions from female to male and is attracted solely to men would typically identify as a gay man.

What are all the letters?

Most commonly you will see the acronym LGBTQ to describe the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer. [Here](#) is a great explanation of the word Queer which can also mean questioning. You may also see the acronym LGBTQIA+ which add intersex, asexual, and the + which holds space for the expanding and new understanding of different parts of the very diverse gender and sexual identities.

This information was taken from several websites. Please explore them for more in-depth information.

[Human Rights Campaign](#)
[GLAAD](#)
[World Health Organization](#)

For tips on being an ally see [this great list](#).

New Helpers in the Garden

The Pantry Gardeners are pleased to announce that Danyel Brisk and her kids Sophie and Isaiah met Molly Faulkner at the First Parish Pantry Garden recently to plant as many as 175 garlic cloves (the seed) into four beds. Later that day, a visitor stopped by — a blue heron on the garden path.

This garlic will grow and be ready for harvest next summer for sale at Russell's Farmer's

Market. We'll add the money we earn to our account to pay for a couple of CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) shares, which we will then distribute to the homeless shelters in Framingham.

We've several CSA farms nearby: Stearns Farm in Framingham, Land's Sake in Weston, Codman Farm in Lincoln — part of a long list. Learn more [here](#).



The Interim Period Overview



On Sunday, Nov. 12, Rev. Deborah and Lea Anderson (Parish Committee chair) updated a group of interested parishioners about the Interim Period and answered questions about what comes next. Many questions are answered in a two-page document prepared by Rev. Deborah called [The Interim Period Overview](#). Please take a look!

Other questions were not as easily answered and related to the Unitarian Universalist Association's recommendations for how to conduct a search. These questions will be answered as the Parish Committee engages with the UUA over the next few months. As we learn more we will provide updates to keep the congregation informed.

While many of us are chomping at the bit to start the process, please rest assured that there is a lot of work going on assessing our strengths and areas for improvement (see Parish Committee report on p. 6). And early in 2024 the Parish Committee will communicate a process for the congregation to select Search Committee members. Please stay tuned!

Welcoming Congregation Updates

Two offering plates were recently shared with OUT MetroWest, an organization in Framingham that builds communities where LGBTQ+ children, youth and young adults thrive, and with SpeakOUT Boston, the bureau that trains and coordinates LGBTQ+ speakers to effectively tell their personal stories hoping to create positive social change through education and dialogue. The guests in the pulpit for the worship services on both October 15 and November 19 were from SpeakOUT Boston.



On November 19 during social hour, members of the congregation, young and older, signed our recently retired rainbow flag with messages of support for the youth at OUT MetroWest. The flag, tattered and stained from its long tenure flying in front of the Meetinghouse, will be delivered to the LGBTQ+ youth to let them know that they have people who care about them and who are allies. This kind of community support is vital to these youth to reinforce that their whole selves are valued and affirmed just as they are.

Notes from Your Health Advisory Team

The First Parish Health Advisory Team—HAT—continues to meet—although thankfully, far less frequently than in the past three years.

In our most recent meeting we noted that the risk level at covidactnow.org remains “low.” In fact, all of Massachusetts is in low (green)! As a caution, we did note that in prior years increased risk levels have arrived in January, so of course we will be monitoring the situation closely from now through spring—and thankfully we have our COVID guidelines to make use of if we need to.

The team also noted that most of what we learned during the pandemic is applicable to preventing any type of respiratory virus or infection. One of those lessons is how effective a good mask can be in preventing illness. We're all assuming that if someone in the congregation tests positive, they will stay at home (and Zoom) Sunday morning. But it's worth considering that any of us who feel a little under the weather might wear a mask while at FP. It's a bit inconvenient, but probably worth it if we can avoid passing on whatever is ailing us to other congregants. With so many bugs moving indoors for the winter, this is a courtesy that we'll all appreciate!



As always, feel free to be in touch with any of us with questions or comments.

*Your Health Advisory Team
Rev. Deborah, Lynne Cavanaugh, Kate Holland, Barb Heffner, and Jim Kitendaugh*

Feed Your Soul This Holiday Season at First Parish



With the rush of the holiday season, December can find us frazzled, with too many tasks and not enough time to enjoy the season. I hope that First Parish can take some of the burden of the season off your shoulders.

This month we will have some wonderful things going on to help you enjoy the season and take some time to breathe and reflect during the holiday season. Our family bell choir is practicing this month to prepare to play at our 4 p.m. Christmas Eve Service.



Whether you are practicing as a family together or just getting a chance to listen to the music of the bells on Christmas Eve, I hope this will add delight to the season.

Want to make gingerbread houses to celebrate the season but you don't have the time or energy to get that together? Well we have you covered! On Friday, December 8 at 6:00 p.m. we will have a spaghetti dinner and afterward do some gingerbread house decorating. We will supply everything so all you need do is show up with your creative ideas. This is for all ages. At 60 I still love to decorate a gingerbread house!! Just email [Kate Holland](mailto:kate.holland@firstparish.org) that you are coming so I can make sure I have enough houses for everyone. A \$10 donation is appreciated to defer the cost of the houses, but not required.

In our SEEK classroom on December 10 we are thrilled to have artist [Janice Corkin Rudolf](mailto:janice.corkin@firstparish.org) join us in class to talk about migratory birds and let us all try our hand at sculpting.

This month we have some additional services for the season. Rev. Deborah will be offering a Blue Christmas service. Not all of us are joyful in this season and this service will hold those who might sometimes feel sad or lonely during the holidays. We have a multigenerational Solstice ritual on Dec 21. We will gather to mark the longest night of the year and the turning of the wheel of the year. We will also have our two wonderful Christmas Eve services. At 4 p.m. we will all gather to tell the nativity story with costumes, carols, and candles. At 7 p.m. we will gather for a service with carols and candles to mark the holiday.

I hope that you will find time to spend some of your holiday season with us.

Kate Holland
Director of Lifespan Education

Spaghetti Dinner and Gingerbread Houses Friday, Dec. 8, 6:00 p.m.

Want to make gingerbread houses to celebrate the season but you don't have time or energy to get that together? Well we have you covered!!



On Friday December 8 at 6:00 p.m. we will gather to decorate some gingerbread houses. We will supply everything so all you need do is show up with your creative ideas. This is for all ages. Just email [Kate Holland](mailto:kate.holland@firstparish.org) that you are coming so I can make sure I have enough houses for everyone. A \$10 donation is appreciated to defer the cost of the houses, but not required.

SEEK Classes This Month

Dec. 3

This Sunday in SEEK we will be exploring our monthly theme of Mystery in the ordinary moments of our lives.

Dec 10

This Sunday we are thrilled to have artist [Janice Corkin Rudolf](mailto:janice.corkin@firstparish.org) join us in class to talk about migratory birds and let us all try our hand at sculpting.

Dec 17

This Sunday our SEEK class will be exploring our theme of Mystery by looking at the Mystery of the returning light.

Our OWL class will meet at 8:00 a.m. for a recap of the lessons learned from our OWL class last year.

New Lives for Old Turkey Roasters at Turning Point

First Parish is gone but not forgotten at Turning Point. When our old friend Pam Dearborn, the Director of Turning Point, came up short on turkey roasters for Thanksgiving, she called the church office, and the Wilson house as a possible last resort. For some reason, and Pam sounded truly puzzled, none of her otherwise generous corporate donors, who have pretty much eliminated food insecurity for Turning Point and the other South Middlesex Opportunity Council shelters, would provide disposable turkey roasters.

She said that her regular corporate donors were giving side dishes and uncooked turkeys this year, and each shelter's residents were cooking and eating them together as a group, in the true Thanksgiving manner. A few staff were volunteering on Thanksgiving to help with questions like, "How long will this turkey take to thaw?" Provided, of course, that they had something to cook them in.

Pam said that she was looking for 50 roasters, enough for all the SMOC shelters, but would be very happy with just 2 or 3 for Turning Point. I warned her that First Parish was already running A LOT of holiday outreach programs but offered, without promises, to post to our social group and drive down with whatever we got. She eagerly agreed to accept used, non-disposable roasters if we could get any. "Roasters with history!" she said. "How perfect for Thanksgiving!"

In the end, we got 16 in all - four roasters with history and a dozen disposables. Pat Sims took time out from Undecorate the Tree to bring over a roaster she had found in a new apartment in 1967, still looking next to new, and a couple of big disposable roasters so sturdy they will probably be used

more than once. Jill Grenon admitted a slight pang as she donated her mother's durable and undoubtedly memory-laden stainless roaster, top and bottom. Chauncey found a disposable roaster sale and bought 10. Our pantry yielded two - a white enamel roaster decorated with strawberries (not for Turning Point, but SMOC has women's and family shelters, too) and Great Aunt Ruby's battered Depression-era roaster, the one I cooked my first turkey in on Thanksgiving, 1975.

Terry, Turning Point's case manager, came out to the parking lot to collect what we had. He grabbed a piece of Aunt Ruby's three-part roaster first, and stared mystified at me through an aluminum box that had neither top nor bottom. I hastily showed him how to fit the roaster bottom and removable basting lid in place to make — "Yes," he smiled, "A good turkey!"

Then I pointed out Pat's and Jill's totally admirable roasters (he agreed, enthusiastically), suggested that the strawberry roaster might find a happier home at another shelter, and snapped a few pics by Turning Point's door. Soon, we were wishing each other "Happy Thanksgiving!" and waving good-bye.

Thank you to all who donated, and "Happy Thanksgiving!" from Turning Point to everyone at First Parish.



The First Parish community came to the rescue when Turning Point shelter needed turkey roasting pans. Case manager Terry accepted the pans, both new and well used, from Penny Wilson.

Penny Wilson



First Parish Observes Holidays with Family Promise Metrowest

Does it seem like there are increased requests from many area agencies this holiday season for donations of gifts and support?



Could it be that there is a stunning amount of need among area families who are facing worsening economic and housing uncertainty?

Family Promise Metrowest is one of the social justice organizations that First Parish is closely connected with. FPM programs work to assist Massachusetts families overwhelmed by the high cost of housing combined with low wages.

Recently FPM requested Thanksgiving Boxes. And we responded! Thanks to everyone who participated in November 12th's special Coffee Hour, came by to chat and hear some more about FPM, and contributed to the family meal box for one of the many families being served by Family Promise.



Two more events are coming up in December.

December 12: Holiday Hot Cocoa Mug Drive and Family Holiday Party

The Thanksgiving Drive has wrapped up, and now the plan is to pass on some holiday cheer to all the families in the FPM programs by providing festive mugs, with hot cocoa packets, and gift cards! If you're interested in volunteering or contributing, contact Lois Doerr.



December 24: Donating Our Christmas Eve Offerings

The final request of 2023 is to please consider contributing in a meaningful way to the work of Family Promise Metrowest. First Parish's collection plate at both the 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. Christmas Eve services will be earmarked for FPM. If you don't plan to attend service on Christmas Eve, you can send a check to the First Parish office. Or you can donate directly through the website: <https://www.familypromisemetrowest.org>

Thank you all.

Lois Doerr

Men's Book Club

Thursday, December 7,
8 p.m. on Zoom

Ready for a rollicking true naval adventure? Join us as we discuss *The Wager: A Tale of Shipwreck, Mutiny, and Murder*, by David Grann. All who identify as male are welcome. Questions? Contact Keith Sims.



Minister's Lunch

Thursday, Dec. 7, 11:30 a.m.

Gather for soup, salad, and good company and conversation in the Sunroom. RSVPs to the office are welcome but not required. Join us!



Mid-Day Meditation

Mondays, 12 p.m. on Zoom
Details in weekly eblast

Join together on Zoom for an hour to gather in community to meditate. All are welcome whether you meditate often or are new to the practice. Contact [Kate Holland](#) with questions.

Knit One, Laugh Two!

Most Wednesdays, 7 p.m.
on Zoom

Do you love to knit or want to learn? The knitters are always happy to see new faces. This small group meets on most Wednesdays — now online. Come knit yourself into a new community. Email or call Heather Ryan for log-in information.

December News from the UU Urban Ministry

Community Conversations: "A Long Road Home": The Roots of Homeownership Inequity, with Aja Kennedy
Tuesday, December 12, 6 - 7 p.m. [online](#)

The UU Urban Ministry presents the second in this year's Community Conversations series on how housing has contributed to racial inequity, especially in Boston.



Aja Kennedy

Aja Kennedy is a Racial Wealth Gap Research Fellow with Boston Indicators. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Economics and Public Policy at Tufts University, where her research areas include urban and public economics, with a particular interest in housing, residential segregation, and land use.

Video Library

Did you know that the UU Urban Ministry has a [video library](#)? If you missed a Community Conversation or want to watch an episode of the Treasures of the Meetinghouse series, you can find it in the video library.

To find out more about the UUUM, please visit uum.org.

Lea Anderson

Question of the Month from the Office How Can I Lower My Taxes By Making a Donation to First Parish?

As we approach the end of the calendar year, now is a good time to bump up your tax deductions by making a donation (or pledge payment) to First Parish! Please get donations in by Dec 31 to have them counted for 2023.



Karen Plaskon

There are several easy ways to make your donation:

- Send a check (as always) to PO Box 397, Wayland MA 01778. Please put in the memo what the donation is for (pledge, additional donation, Sunday plate with date or

continued

plate share organization, or other First Parish fund)

- Give online securely at www.uuwayland.org/donate. Here you can make a single donation via credit card or directly from your bank OR set up automatic payments to be taken weekly, monthly, etc. What a great way to stay on top of regular pledge payments!
- Download the Vanco Mobile Faith Engagement app to your smartphone and make a payment from there.
- Text your payment to 833-264-0104. Just send the amount (no \$ sign). Have your credit card available the first time you do this.

Contact me (office@uuwayland.org, 508-358-6133) if you have any questions.



December

- 2** Pop-Up Holiday Shop
Sat., Dec. 2, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m., p. 5
- 3** Community Carol Sing
Sun., Dec. 3, 4:30 p.m., p. 5
- 7** Minister's Lunch
Thurs., Dec. 7, 11:30 a.m., p. 13
- 7** Men's Book Group
Thurs., Dec. 7, 8:00 p.m., p. 13
- 8** Spaghetti and Gingerbread Houses
Friday, Dec. 8, 6 p.m., p. 11
- 10** Music Sunday
Sunday, Dec. 10, 11 a.m., p. 5
- 12** UUUM Community Conversation
Tuesday, Dec. 12, 6:00 p.m., p. 14
- 12** Conversation Circle: Gender
Tuesday, Dec. 12, 7 p.m., p. 8
- 13** Conversation Circle: Gender
Wed. Dec. 13, 7 p.m., p. 8
- 18** Blue Christmas Vespers Service
Monday, Dec. 18, 7:30 p.m., p. 5
- 21** Winter Solstice Gathering
Thursday, Dec. 21, 6:45 p.m., p. 5
- 24** Christmas Eve Services
Sun. Dec. 24, 4 and 7 p.m., p. 3
- 31** Joint New Year's Service at First Parish of
Sudbury
Sunday, Dec. 31, 10 a.m., p. 3

The Wayland Unitarian is the monthly newsletter of the First Parish in Wayland, a Unitarian Universalist congregation. A full calendar of events is posted on our website, www.uuwayland.org. A directory of community members is also available; contact the office for the password.

Parish Office Hours

M, T, W, F: 9 a.m. — 3 p.m.
Th: 11 a.m. — 3 p.m.
In person W & F; 508-358-6133

Worship Service and SEEK (Spiritual and Ethical Exploration for Kids): **See Sunday Schedule, p. 3**

Our Ministers

[The Rev. Deborah Bennett](#), Interim Minister
The Rev. Dr. [Deborah Pope-Lance](#), Affiliate Minister

Our Staff

[Kate Holland](#), Director of Lifespan Education
[Polly Oliver](#), Music Director and Organist
[Karen Plaskon](#), Parish Administrator
[Leo Monzon](#), Bookkeeper
Emma Silberman, Childcare Provider

Unitarian Newsletter Team

Ann Gordon, Barb Heffner, Nathalie Thompson, Chauncey Wilson

First Parish is located at 225 Boston Post Road in Wayland, at the corner of Routes 20, 126 and 27. See our website for parking information.

Our mailing address is:
First Parish in Wayland
PO Box 397, Wayland, MA 01778



What's Happening?

Find all First Parish activities on [our website calendar](#).
Check it out!

