

THE FOCALPOINT

FIRST PARISH IN LEXINGTON
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

February 2018 — What Does It Mean to be a Community of Perseverance?

February Worship Services	Pg. 2
Rev. Anne Mason	Pg. 4
A Note from the Board	Pg. 5
Rip Jackson, Director of Music	Pg. 6
Lifespan Religious Education—SHYG	Pg. 8
Voices on the Green	Pg. 10
Save the Date—Lisa Perry-Wood Installation	Pg. 11
Imagination Café	Pg. 12
Climate Action Team	Pg. 14
Stewardship Pledge Drive	Pg. 16
Social Action Ministry	Pg. 18
February Calendar	Pg.19

Deadline for March issue: Friday, February 23rd

Worship Services for February

What Does it Mean to be a Community of Perseverance?

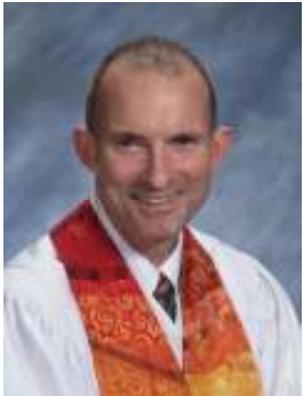


February 4
Rev. Anne Mason
"Practice Persistence"

These are the times which try our souls. Therefore, these are the times when we need to be intentional about taking care of ourselves, of each other, and of

our community. For we need each other when times are tough. We need each other to ensure our future. And most importantly, the world needs us to carry our message - with persistence - into the places where people are hurting.

February 11
Rev. Fred Small
"Praise Be the Flood"



Scientists predict that climate change will have dire consequences for humanity and the planet we inhabit. Can global warming move us to change course and build a new society grounded in justice, equity, and compassion?

A Unitarian Universalist pastor, singer-songwriter, and former environmental lawyer, Rev. Fred Small is Minister for Climate Justice at Arlington Street Church, Boston. Cited by Bill McKibben as "one of the key figures in the religious environmental surge," Fred left parish ministry in 2015 to devote his energies to climate advocacy. We welcome him to First Parish!

Worship Services for February

What Does it Mean to be a Community of Perseverance?



February 18
Rev. Anne Mason
"From Biltmore to BLUU"

In a follow-up sermon to her MLK sermon, Rev. Anne continues her exploration of the difficulties inherent for African American voices to be heard and valued within our denomination. Today we lift up the

Black Lives Unitarian Universalist movement and will have a special collection to support our colleagues of color who have been marginalized through years of white supremacy.

February 25
Rev. Anne Mason
"Kirtan"



Mid-winter muck getting you down? Need some color in your life? Come and celebrate Holi - the ancient Hindu festival of

color. Rev. Anne will offer readings and teachings from the Hindu sacred tradition as Rip Jackson and the choir collaborate with our NYC-based guest musician, Nirmal Chandraratna, to provide us all with an interactive musical and spiritual worship service. This morning we invite you to participate in the ecstatic ancient singing tradition of Kirtan led by Nirmal. Singing chant offers us the experience of deeper connection with music, each other, and ourselves.

All Sunday services begin at 10:30am in the Sanctuary.

From Your Minister
Rev. Anne Mason

There is an ancient story of an artist who was trapped on the island of Crete with his young son. Together Daedalus and Icarus watched the birds fly freely, and got an idea - they could build wings! They gathered feathers and bound them together with wax. You know the story - the anxious father warned his son not to fly too high, or he would get so close to the sun that the wax would melt. But he also warned him not to fly too low, or the water would soak his feathers and he would sink.

This story does not have a happy ending. But it has a teaching for us as a church community. This month we will spend time together creating the vision of where we want to journey together, and figuring out how we want to get there. The story of Icarus teaches us that we mustn't fly too high and melt our wings - but just as importantly, we must not fly too low and fall into the water. Somewhere in between we will find that sweet spot where we can gather our forces, build our wings, and bravely launch ourselves off the safety of our rocky cliff so that we can sail over the waters and land together in freedom.

As we begin to explore our theme of Perseverance, let us remember that none of us are flying solo. We are in this journey together. Each person is an important part of this community, and only together can we chart our path to new and exciting lands. I am honored to be traveling with you, and I ask you all to consider how you can contribute to our journey together. And let's have some fun along the way!

In faith,
Rev. Anne

A Note from the Board
Katie O'Hare Gibson and David Rose, co-chairs

The Board would like to thank the wonderful team that used their Imagination and Creativity to put together the Imagination Cafés. We are so pleased that our January 28 session was at full capacity! For those of you who missed it, don't fret! We have another session scheduled for Feb 11, and hope you will join us then! This is an amazing opportunity to share a meal with one another and discuss the first of our three "Open Questions" for the year: "What creative ideas and priorities should guide us as we reimagine our community's activities and facilities...in order to promote spiritual and personal growth within our community?"

Over the next month, you will be hearing from the Stewardship Committee about our 2018-2019 pledge drive. We would like to thank them along with the Finance Committee, who have been working to help keep the Board informed about our particular gifts and needs as we approach the budget season. Look for your pledge drive cards coming this month!

Lastly, we want to recognize Bob Gibbons and Dave Juitt for the many hours of work they have put in to help Jane and other First Parish staff in clarifying policies and procedures for building use as we have re-imagined some of the ways our newly painted spaces can be used to welcome new people and groups from the community!

BOARD

Sound Journey with Nirmal Chandraratna
Saturday, February 24 at 7:30 PM
Free Will Offering

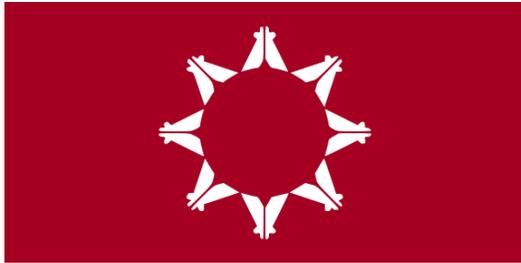


First Parish welcomes Nirmal Chandraratna, a New York City–based Kirtan artist and composer with a passion for nurturing connection to spirit, to community, and to one's deeper self—through music. Using the voice, the harmonium, and the cello, Nirmal creates music for Kirtan and meditation, and works for communal performance. He will collaborate with our director of music Rip Jackson. In this evening experience, set in a dynamic, meditative environment, layered textures of the human voice, cello, and percussion will weave a tapestry of music and mantra. Though sound vibration works on subtle levels, even at the level of human perception, we are able to receive and interact intentionally with vibrations, not only through our ears but also through our bodies: we respond viscerally to beauty in the form of harmonics, rhythm and melody, and we can work in this space to align our lives with our vision for a better world. At the beginning of the evening, we'll come together as a community, singing together and sharing our intentions. We'll raise the intensity, and then you'll be invited to settle into a comfortable position to meditate in a darkened, candle-lit environment as a concert of expansive music and textures unfolds.

First Parish in Lexington presents
Paul Winter's Missa Gaia: A Mass for the Earth
Friday and Saturday, April 13-14, 2018 at 7:30 PM
Pre-concert drumming at 7:15 PM
Earth Fair & Reception in Parish Hall after the performances



First Parish in Lexington will present Paul Winter's Missa Gaia: A Mass for the Earth on Friday and Saturday, April 13-14, 2018 at 7:30 PM. This profound work, under the musical direction of Rip Jackson and theatrical and dance direction of Maris Wolff, will be a collaboration between the First Parish sanctuary and children's choirs, the Vermont Dance Collective, and a world music ensemble of percussionists, guitar, piano, electric keyboards, soprano sax, oboe, cello, and bass. Integrating world music with songs from tundra wolfs, canyon and musical wrens, harp seals, a flight of loons and singing humpback whales to celebrate the whole earth as a sacred space, the Missa Gaia was commissioned by the Dean of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine as a contemporary ecumenical Mass for the Earth. There will be an Earth Fair and reception featuring Lexington environmental organizations in Parish Hall after both performances. Tickets will be on sale through the office at First Parish and online. Tickets are \$25.00 for adults, \$20 seniors and \$15.00 for students. Reduced ticket prices are available for those in need. For more information, visit www.fplex.org or call 781-862-8200.



Pine Ridge Reservation Flag

The Senior High Youth Group is gearing up for their Service Trip to Pine Ridge Reservation in June. Pine Ridge Reservation is home to the Oglala Lakota Sioux people, a Native American tribe that is reclaiming its heritage and has experienced a long and painful relationship with the United States.

The leaders of Pine Ridge are working hard to build a sustainable future for their people which includes cultivating soil, fencing off gardens, establishing an Education and Resource Center, constructing a community center, and much more. We won't know what community-driven project we will be working on until much closer to the date of the trip. The trip will provide our youth with an incredible opportunity to learn about Lakota life and culture; we will take that knowledge back home to Massachusetts.

SHYG started off 2018 with a presentation from another local church that has been out to Pine Ridge several times. The presentation included the history of the Lakota people and the current living conditions of Pine Ridge. You can find out more about the organization started by our presenters here at

www.LakotaYouthStay.org

If you want to support the service trip, please check out the fun events and other opportunities listed here!

- Visit the youth sales table during coffee hour for soup and organic, fair-trade products from Equal Exchange!
- Sign up for the Kids' Night Out on February 10th!
- Join us for our themed dinner on March 24th!
- Get a team together for trivia night on May 5th
- Sign up to volunteer your time and talent by emailing Youth Program Coordinator Katie Camire at youth@fplex.org

I encourage you to talk to our amazing youth and our wonderful volunteer advisors if you want to find out more!

Attention High School Youth !

Are interested in SHYG? All youth grades 9 through 12 are welcome to join us at any time! We meet most Sunday evenings from 7:00-9:00 pm; please email Katie at youth@fplex.org to say you'll join us, to find out more, or to get added to the email list for complete updates!



**Voices on the Green
Modern Love**

What does “Modern Love” look like? Katie O’Hare Gibson, Chris Hess, Marshall Wilensky, Katherine Rose, Al Jacobson, Regie O’Hare Gibson, and Tom Daley each have a modern personal love story to tell that you won’t want to miss!

In addition to the stories, the evening will feature varied love songs by popular singer and humorist Don White



and a presentation on the neuroscience of love by Allison Posey (also of Lexington).



This latest Voices on the Green event will be at turns both touching and humorous. All of this with “hearty” refreshments and easy access, right here at First Parish church on the Green.

Save the date: **Friday, February 9th** at 7:00pm – five days before Valentine’s Day!

Doors open at 6:30 for beverages and socializing; event begins at 7:00pm. Tickets can be purchased at social hour or at voicesonthegreen.brownpaperticket.com.



Save the Date!

The Ordination of Lisa Perry-Wood

SAVE THE DATE

Lisa Perry-Wood's
Ordination into the Unitarian Universalist Ministry

Sunday, June 3, 2018
3:00 PM

First Parish in Lexington

Reception Immediately Following

Child Care Available

Witness this milestone event in the life of long time First Parish member Lisa Perry-Wood as she becomes an Ordained Unitarian Universalist Minister.

For more information or to volunteer (usher, donate food, etc.) at the Ordination, contact Tom Rich at tom.f.rich@gmail.com.





If you didn't make it to the first Imagination Café, please come to the second, identical Café on **Sunday, February 11th** after the service. Lunch will be served. Please sign up at the office or imagination-cafe-first-parish.eventbrite.com. Kids and youth are welcome to participate. Childcare will be provided for those who wish to use it.

At the Imagination Cafés, we will be addressing one open question for the whole congregation:

How should we re-imagine our community's activities and facilities in order to promote spiritual and personal growth within our community?

In addition to good food and company, the Café will encourage table-talk about the following three "looking ahead" sub-topics of that question:

Looking ahead, who do you imagine as in "our community"?

Do you imagine "our community" to mean primarily members of First Parish, of nearby towns, the nation? Who is missing, or unwelcome, from our community? Should FP try to mirror the demographics of our surrounding communities?

Looking ahead, what do you imagine are the most important programs or activities (to promote spiritual and personal growth) for that community?

What new kinds of services or programs should we offer? What should we reduce? How should we differentiate our activities from those of others? What would spiritual and personal growth mean especially for us?

Looking ahead, how do you imagine we should prioritize and allocate our limited resources (to promote spiritual and personal growth)?

How should we change the priorities for staff, for volunteers, for financial resources? How should we re-imagine the purpose, design, or configuration of our spaces? What new kinds of facilities or capabilities will we need?

We look forward to hearing from *everyone* in the congregation as we imagine our future together.



The Green Corner

News & Action

First Parish Climate Action Team

There was positive energy at the first meeting of the new First Parish Climate Action Team on January 14. Commitments were made to provide the congregation with timely action items and news of local, state-wide, and national initiatives. This will be done through this Green Corner in the Focal Point and Weekly Updates.

It was also agreed to explore what new efforts were needed to fulfill our commitment at a Green Sanctuary Congregation and to promote the Missa Gaia concert on April 13 & 14 among local environmental groups and invite them to set up an information table at the event.

Next meeting of the Climate Action Team is Sunday February 25 after worship at 11:45. Room to be announced.

For more information, contact

Stephen Shick at stephenshick04@gmail.com

Bob Kvaal at bkvaal@gmail.com

David Pollack at joananddavid3@verizon.net

Immediate Action Needed before February 7th Take Individual Action Now or Join C.A.T.'s "phone-in" on Sunday, February 4th 11:45am

It's crunch time for the Massachusetts carbon pricing campaign.

Both carbon pricing dividend bills S.1821 and H.1726) <https://climate-xchange.org/massachusetts-campaign/about-the-bill/> remain in the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy (TUE). They must be voted out of committee by February 7 or they are likely dead for the session. A **majority of state senators** and about 70 of 160 House members have announced support. Of the 90 remaining House members, most have not taken a position, and many still know little about the bills. Thus, **if a carbon pricing and dividend bill reaches the floor, it will likely pass.**

The TUE Committee has taken no action on the bills. We need to persuade the House TUE Committee Chair (Tom Golden) and House Leadership (including Speaker DeLeo) that climate change legislation must be a priority, and carbon pricing deserves a vote. We can do this by: (a) getting more House members to endorse; and (b) asking members who have already endorsed to pressure their leadership to bring the bills out of committee.

Both Senator Friedman and Rep (or Chairman) Kaufman have signed onto Senator Barrett's bill. Please contact Senator Friedman's and Chairman Kaufman's offices, let them know you are a constituent, and ask that they speak to Senate and House leadership to push for carbon. We need everyone to call or email!

State Senator: Cindy F. Friedman at cindy.friedman@masenate.gov or 617-722-1432

State House Rep: Jay Kaufman at jay.kaufman@mahouse.gov or 617-722-2320

The Canvass this year continues to celebrate the heritage of our congregation and recognizes the role we all have in building toward an inspiring future. The Imagination Café events led by the Board is a singular opportunity for everyone to embrace to potential of our community and provide guidance in making plans for the years ahead. In the weeks that follow the information about the pledge drive will be distributed demonstrating how important it is for us all to feel that we are united in supporting the financial needs of the church. Showing this support through your annual pledge is a vitally important way to demonstrate your commitment to First Parish.

What is the pledge drive?

This is the time of year when we make our financial pledges to the church to support the programs and mission of First Parish.

Why it's important

Did you know that over 65% of our budget comes from our annual Pledge Drive? Our pledges enable us to build the church we want.

Who Participates?

You do! All members and friends contribute.

When is it?

We will have several events promoting and discussing Stewardship goals and engaging with you in conversation. This will culminate with a Celebration Sunday with a food, drinks, and entertainment event in the month of April.

How do I pledge?

Pledge cards will be mailed to you in early March. On Sunday, March 12, bring your card to church or pledge online. <see Fplex.org>

Who is driving the Stewardship Pledge Drive this year?

The Stewardship Planning Team members are: Bob Coyne, Marsha Fox, Katie O'Hare-Gibson, Elisabeth Jas, Erik Svenson, and Tom Rich. Send Questions or Comments to Stewardship@fplex.org.



Good Samaritan Fund

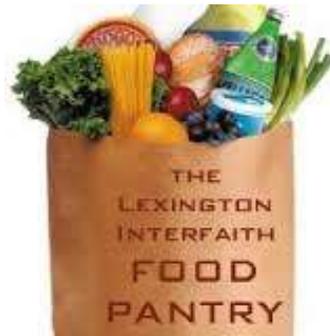
Through the generosity of Bruce and Eva Gordon, long-time Lexington residents, humanitarians, and members of First Parish in Lexington, the Social Action Committee of First Parish would like to announce the first wave of these awards with an **application deadline of February 1st**. Selected recipients will be notified by March 15th. For complete information: fplex.org/index.php/faith-in-action/good-samaritan-fund/ or stop by First Parish during office hours, Monday through Thursday 8:30am—4:00pm.

Applications will be held in strict confidence. Questions should be directed to: goodsamaritanfund@fplex.org.

Completed applications should be mailed to: Good Samaritan Fund, Attention: Chair, Social Action Committee, First Parish Church of Lexington, 7 Harrington Road, Lexington, MA 02421

Food First Sunday

This is a reminder to bring in non-perishable food donation on the first Sunday of the month, February 4th, for our food drive to help those hungry in Lexington. Please bring a donation to the basket at the front of the sanctuary. You may also leave donations in the basket outside of the main office. Thank you for supporting the Lexington Interfaith Food Pantry.



Thursday, February 1st

Nonfiction Book Group, 7:30pm, Parlor

Sunday, February 4th

Newcomer Drop-in, 11:45am, Minister's Office; Communities without Borders, 3:00pm, Green Room

Thursday, February 8th

Climate Collaborative, 7:30pm, Common Room

Friday, February 9th

Voices on the Green, 7:00pm, Sanctuary

Saturday, February 10th

New UU Workshop, 9:00am, Parish Hall; SHYG "Night Out", 5:00pm, Parker Hall

Sunday, February 11th

Imagination Café #2, 11:45am, Parish Hall

Monday, February 12th

Unity Group luncheon, 12:00pm, Parker Hall

Wednesday, February 14th

80+ Luncheon, 12:30pm, Parker Hall

Saturday, February 24th

Sound Bath Concert, 7:30pm, Sanctuary



Your generous donations for the special plate collection in January raised \$987 for the Douglas House. Thank you all!