

# THE FOCALPOINT

FIRST PARISH <sup>IN</sup> LEXINGTON  
UNITARIAN  UNIVERSALIST

## *June 2017—What Does It Mean to be a Community of Joy?*

### Contents:

June Worship Services	Pg. 2
Rev. Anne Mason, Minister	Pg. 4
News from the Board	Pg. 6
Director of Music	Pg. 7
Lifespan Religious Education	Pg. 8
Buildings & Grounds	Pg. 10
Summer Schedule Information	Pg. 13
Special Plate Collection	Pg. 14
Social Action Ministry	Pg. 15
Special Concert	Pg. 16
Fun at Mayfair	Pg. 17
June Calendar	Pg. 18

**Deadline for July/August issue: Monday, June 26th**

**June 4, Rev. Anne Mason**  
**"Courage for Joy"**



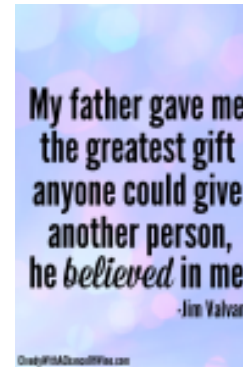
This month we begin our exploration of what it means to be a community of Joy. As Molly Fumia says: "To be joyful in the universe is a brave and reckless act. The courage for joy springs not from the certainty of human experience, but the surprise." Let us be together in community, welcoming the members who have joined us this year, and preparing for our Annual Meeting following the service. May it be a joyful morning for us all!

**June 11, Rev. Anne Mason and Lisa Maria Steinberg, Worship Leaders**  
**Annual Flower Communion for All Ages**



Come and join First Parish in our meaningful end of year ritual. As each member brings a flower from your own garden (or local florist!) we recognize the individual contribution we each make to the wonderful bouquet of wholeness that is our congregation. As we each take a flower from someone else, we will carry home our connections to each other and a sense of gratitude for all that we each bring. What a beautiful season of growth we have had together this year.

**June 18, Rev. Anne Mason**  
**"The Right Time"**



We often wonder just what is the right time to begin something new. As school lets out and the weather (hopefully) warms, is this the moment to pay attention to what may have lain dormant under the winter snows for many a month? This Father's Day, let us dwell in the present moment, sharing gratitude for the love and care of the fathers in our lives, and for the nurturing which helped us become who we are.

**June 25**  
**General Assembly Livestream Worship**



This Sunday we worship (virtually) with the thousands of Unitarian Universalists who are attending our annual meeting in New Orleans. The worship of General Assembly is always a highlight of the year, with fabulous music, preaching, and the overwhelming presence of so many Unitarian Universalists in one place. We will celebrate the election of our new UUA president, and perhaps we will hear some of the passionate work of those gathered this year who will have wrestled with the many issues facing our denomination. Worship here at First Parish will be in Parker Hall as we watch the livestream of worship at General Assembly.

From Your Minister

“The Sweet June days are come again, the birds are on the wing” writes Longfellow. How we long for these days of beauty and light, when we can take time to refresh our spirits after the long cold spring we have endured this year. And what a year we have shared together. We have rejoiced in the pageantry and joy of the Installation. We applauded our youth in Coming of Age and Youth Sunday. We surpassed our goals in the Stewardship Campaign and in Mayfair! Our attendance on Sunday morning is up, and our youth program and youth choir are filled with bright and beautiful faces. What a joy it is to see us grow.

Together we have been through the transitions of our first year, and I hope that you are filled with as much encouragement as I am. For we are wrestling with difficult topics, but we are doing it with love. We are delving into some tough stuff, but we speak the truth in love. This has been a hard year for our nation, but we have come together to talk about it, and I believe there is a new face of activism here at First Parish and across the face of our country. Members of our congregation began the Minuteman Indivisible group to help us all to engage in the democratic process, and I am proud of their work in helping Lexington residents to be more politically active.

June 11 will be our final day of the regular church year, when we gather for Flower Communion. Please bring a flower to church that day as we celebrate the UU ritual

which began in 1923 in Prague to celebrate the diversity of the Unitarian congregation. It is just as important today to recognize and celebrate our diversity and I look forward to sharing this tender time with you all.

Church will continue all summer, however, as Lisa Perry-Wood will be our summer minister for several weeks. She will help with pastoral care while I am on vacation as well, and I’m grateful for her experience gained through ministerial internships and chaplaincy work. Lisa will be joined by other speakers this summer, including our own seminarians Marianne DiBlasi and Bethany Lowe, so be sure to plan to attend worship when your schedule will allow this summer!

Simon and I will be tending to our new home and garden in Westford this summer, and taking a few short trips to visit family and friends. May you have a blessed summer and find the rest and renewal that you need.

In faith,

*Rev. Anne*



This is my final Focalpoint column as your Board Chair. At the June 13th Board meeting, the Board will elect a new Chair, and I will transition to ex-officio Board member, which, according to the First Parish Bylaws, "serves the purpose of supporting the new Chairperson during his/her first year as s/he transitions into the role as well as provide for institutional continuity." It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as Chair the past two years.

I am especially pleased that my term is ending with our Capital Campaign in full swing. As previously announced, we will conduct this campaign in two phases. The goal for Phase I is to raise \$300,000 by the end of June 2017 to fund a building restoration program carefully planned by First Parish's Building and Grounds Committee, based on the Historic Structures Report conducted a year ago. I want to thank the Phase I planning team, in particular its Chair, David Bovet. The other members are Bob Gibbons, Elisabeth Jas, Deb Lapidés, and David Rose.

Phase II will begin in the fall, when we will start a congregation-wide discussion on what we as a congregation wants to be; that is, First Parish's mission and vision for the future. Achieving that long-term vision will require changes and improvements to the building, which will be a focus of Phase II of the Capital Campaign, along with other measures that will help secure the long-term financial health of our church.

In the spirit of community,  
Tom Rich  
Board Chair

### **A message from our Director of Music**

For the last week in May and the first week in June, I will be out of the office due to a scheduled surgery. I will be having a two-year's long herniated disc in my neck repaired. This surgery will provide me with a great amount of pain relief. I appreciate all of you thinking of me as I have this fairly routine procedure, and I look forward to being back providing music for worship on June 11th!

*~Rip*



**Lisa Maria Steinberg, Director of Lifespan Religious Education  
Adult Programs, Youth, and Children**



The big news from the land of Lifespan Religious Education is that the Lifespan RE Committee has reflected on its existence and, in growing through the wisdom of its members, will be morphing into two Teams – **The Adult Programs**

**Team and The Children and Youth Team.**

**The Adult Programs Team** will meet on an as-needed basis with me to plan and support a variety of programs, including ongoing programs, such as the Chalice Circles. Debbie Armstrong, Ruth Rose, and Dave Horton are on the Team, and you can be too! We are looking for a couple more members, and specifically would like to bring on a member who has an interest/affinity for the theater arts.

Rev. Anne and I are excited about creating more opportunities for new programming, specifically around spiritual and theological topics that will allow for both new and seasoned UUs to dive deep into together. Sometimes the AP Team will meet altogether, other times one or two members may meet in support of a specific track in our Adult Programs. If this sounds interesting to you, please be in touch with me!

**The Children and Youth Team** will also meet on an as-needed basis (likely 3 times a year: fall, winter, and spring). The CY Team will support me by reflecting on program needs and priorities. As one of our outgoing co-chairs of the LRE Committee shared happily, she rarely came away from our meetings with action items! We are looking for parents/caregivers to serve on this team, (the

**Lisa Maria Steinberg, Director of Lifespan Religious Education  
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CY Team will have 3-4 members total, each representing one or more of following age groups: K-2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>, and high school). Your role on the CY Team will be to bring your voice and the voices of other families with kids the same age(s) as yours to provide consultation, feedback, and support decision making.

If you'd like to know more, please be in touch! We'd love to have you!

*~Lisa Maria*



## A Few Words from Buildings & Grounds

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As I'm sure you have noticed, the physical plant of the church has been significantly upgraded this year. And as is very evident right now, more work is underway. It's exciting to see the building we love being restored to the beauty she is!

"Many hands make light the work" was proven again at First Parish! Some of the tasks, large and small—but important—that were accomplished, and the leaders of these efforts are:

- Moving the History Room to the first floor, and moving the Music Director's office to the balcony level, plus creating a Music Library room next door (Music and History Committees)
- Organizing and upgrading the kitchen for food safety and efficient use, and establishing regular "deep cleanings" to keep it so (Amy Breiting, Marty Kvaal, Carolyn Fleiss, Elsie Petty).
- Improving the fire safety signage and equipment for the building (Dori Reuss, Bert Reuss)
- Installing new signage on the Wayside Pulpit for Rev. Anne (Jim Gross)
- Improving the lighting in the parking lot and around the building, inside and out (Lew Counts)
- Installing plexiglass storms on basement and sanctuary windows for winter (Building and Grounds Committee and Bob Coughlin)
- Improving the sound system in the sanctuary (Bill Pittore)
- Improving the appearance and safety of the grounds

## A Few Words from Buildings & Grounds

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with shrub removal, drainage, roof repair, lock and porch work

(Jim Gross and Lew Counts)

--Painting Parker Hall and the side portico vestibule (Building and Grounds, Bob Coughlin)

--Installing new flagpoles and flag (Lew Counts)

--Coordinating the repair of the elevator and shaft roof (Bob Coughlin, Bill Pittore, Toni Tasker)

--Repairing and painting the stairway to the balcony, and doors (Bob Coughlin)

--Innumerable meetings with contractors to prepare the exterior for painting, basement and sanctuary windows for replacement and restoration, and women's room for upgrades (Building and Grounds chair Dave Pollack and assistant Toni Tasker)

Seven Work Parties (yes, SEVEN!) were held throughout the year, with cleaning, painting, repairing, creating, polishing, sorting, dumping, and all manner of work accomplished. Without the dozens and dozens of parishioners who gave their time at these parties, the work could not have been accomplished.

MANY THANKS go to: all the above leaders, as well as Dave Meharry, Maureen Bovet, Sarah Matthews, Charlie Goodell, Tom Rich, Pete Tasker, Bob Earsy, Nancy Earsy, Anne Mason, Simon Andrews, Russ Tanner, Bob Kvaal, Tom Wanderer, John Howell, Ben Soule, Ellan Siegal, Jane Eckert, Bob Eckert, Tom Rich, Nina Rich, Hazel Graham, Emma Brinton, Mary Brinton, Tish Callanan,

Ned Goodell, Ruth Rose, Vanessa Barss, David Townzen, Lee Brami, Jane Beswick, Elisabeth Jas, and all those who contributed behind the scenes. And a special thanks goes to Bob Coughlin, as our Maintenance Supervisor, who continued his tireless work to keep our building looking good!

Coming up in June: painting the front of the church right up to the spire (thus the scaffolding); replacing basement windows all along the east side; upgrading toilets, stalls and flooring in the women's room; and painting the exterior of Parish Hall.

Please give a word of thanks to those who have contributed this year, and sign up next year for a work party if you missed one this year. Good things happen!

--Toni Tasker, for the Building and Grounds Committee



As summer approaches and life slows down a bit, schedules are different for staff and the church. Below you will find all the information you need to know.

- The office hours from July 1—August 26 will be Monday through Friday, 9am—1pm.
- Rev. Anne will be leading worship until June 18th. She will be on vacation in July and on study leave for a time in August. During August, Rev. Anne will be on-call for pastoral emergencies.
- Lisa Perry-Wood will be the on-call minister for pastoral emergencies for July. Her contact information is lperrywood@gmail.com or 781-883-3411.
- Sunday services through September 3rd will be lead by Marianne DiBlasi, Bethany Lowe, Lisa Perry-Wood, Joe Foster, Rev. Anne, and Mandy Beal. Music will be provided by Yukiko Sekino, Hannah Shields, and Sarah Hager. Summer services begin at 10:30am.
- Lisa Maria Steinberg will be on vacation the weeks of June 20—26 and July 22—29.
- Rip Jackson will be on professional development retreats and on vacation throughout the summer.
- Bob Coughlin will be on vacation July 1—July 15.
- Jane Foley will be on vacation the week of June 19—23 and some time in mid-August.

If you have any questions, please contact Jane in the office at 781-862-8200 x1.

Happy Summer!



The recipient for June's Special Plate Collection is METCO, Inc., a voluntary school desegregation program that began over 50 years ago in Boston. According to President Charles E. Walker, Jr.,

*"10,000 black, brown, white, urban, suburbanites, parents demanding equal access to quality public school educations led it in 1963. In 2017, 51 [sic] years and three generations later, these same grand, and great parents are demanding an end to achievement gaps and the statewide elimination of all racially imbalanced and racially isolated schools."*

The plate collection will take place on Sunday, June 4th.

Last month your generous contributions totaled \$966, which will be sent to UU Mass Action to enhance their programs. Thank you!



## Day of Service

All members of First Parish and their families are invited to First Parish's Annual Day of Service on **Saturday, June 3rd**, free to participate in our Annual Day of Service. A wide spectrum of activities will be available to all ages.

To date, we have the opportunity to participate in the following activities: Lexington Interfaith Garden, Lexington Food Pantry, Communities Without Borders, The Douglas House, and Lexington Conservation Stewards project on Wright's Farm.

The day will begin at 8 AM with a blessing by Rev. Anne, meeting with Team Leader, and breakfast. Most activities will wrap up around 12 or 12:30. Hope to see you there!

## Lexington Food Pantry—First Sunday Collection

With the aim of increasing the visibility of our commitment to the Lexington Food Pantry, and to highlight hunger in America in general, the Social Action Committee will place the food collection basket in the front of the sanctuary on the first Sunday of every month during the church year. Please make a special point to bring non-perishable items for the basket on that Sunday and deposit them on either your way into the sanctuary or on your way out. Our first First Sunday will be **June 4th**. Please be generous and thank you.

~Tom Wanderer and Lynn Yansen for the Social Action Committee



**Yukino Sekino Piano Concert**  
**Sunday, June 11, 2017 at 2pm**  
First Parish in Lexington  
Suggested Donation: \$10

Pianist Yukiko Sekino will give a solo piano recital at the First Parish in Lexington on Sunday, June 11<sup>th</sup>, at 2pm. Works will include Chopin's Etudes, Op. 25, Copland's Piano Variations, preludes by David Rakowski, and sonatas by Scarlatti. Yukino plays piano for First Parish worship services in the summer. The Gold Medalist of the 2006 International Russian Music Piano Competition and a winner of the S&R Foundation's Washington Award, she has performed as a soloist and a chamber musician in the United States, Europe, Japan, and China. Currently, she is piano faculty at the New England Conservatory's Preparatory School and School of Continuing Education, and an Affiliate Artist at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.



Thanks to all who  
helped make Mayfair a  
huge success!



Recurring Events

Choir Warm-up, Sundays, at 9:45 a.m.  
Worship Service, Sundays, at 10:30 a.m.  
Children's Choir Rehearsal, Sundays, at 11:45 a.m.  
Social Action, monthly, 3rd Sunday, at 11:45 a.m.  
Sr. High Youth Group, Sundays, at 7 p.m.  
Members & Friends, monthly, 4th Monday, 7:30 p.m.  
Music Committee, monthly, 1st Tuesday, at 3:00 p.m.  
Parish Board, monthly, 2nd Tuesday, at 7:00 p.m.  
Insight Meditation, Tuesdays, at 7:30 p.m.  
Finance Committee, monthly, 1st Tuesday, at 7:30 p.m.  
Building & Grounds, 3rd Tuesday, at 7:30 p.m.  
History Committee, 2nd Wednesday, at 1:30 p.m.  
Choir Rehearsal, Wednesdays, at 7:30 p.m.  
Creative Callings, 2nd and 4th Thursdays, at 2:00 p.m.  
Thursday Meditation, Thursdays, at 4:00 p.m.



Saturday, June 3rd  
Day of Service, 8:00am

Sunday, June 4th  
Semi-Annual Meeting, 12:00pm, Sanctuary

Monday, June 5th  
Window replacement work—downstairs closed through  
June 19th

Saturday, June 10th  
Munroe Saturday Night, 7:00pm, Sanctuary

Sunday, June 11th  
Yukiko Sekino Piano Concert, 2:00pm, Sanctuary

Monday, June 12th  
Unity Group, 12:00pm, Parish Hall

Friday, June 16th  
Roaring Jelly, 7:00pm, Parish Hall

Tuesday, June 20th  
80+ luncheon, 12:30pm, Parker Hall

Monday, June 26th  
Focalpoint deadline, 12:00pm