

# THE FOCALPOINT

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



## *In The September 2016 Issue:*

- \* Message from Rev. Anne Mason
- \* Choir Schedule for September
- \* Lifespan Religious Education Fall Preview
- \* Social Hour Host List, September to January
- \* What's New with Building & Grounds
- \* History Committee News

## **Contents:**

September Worship Services	Pg. 2
Rev. Anne Mason, Minister	Pg. 4
Tom Rich, First Parish Board	Pg. 6
Save the Dates	Pg. 7
Social Hour Host List	Pg. 8
Rip Jackson, Director of Music	Pg. 10
Lisa Maria Steinberg, Lifespan Religious Education	Pg. 14
Opportunities for Connection	Pg. 17
Buildings & Grounds Update	Pg. 18
History Committee	Pg. 20

**Note: Deadline for the October issue is  
Friday, September 23rd.**

**Sunday, September 4**  
**"Going the Distance"**  
**Elisabeth Jas**



Photo by E. Jas

The trek was described as 73 miles with 25 pounds of personal gear. In the end, we travelled 110 with 50 pounds on our back most days. Have you ever made a commitment that burdened you more than you expected? When you sought to lay it down, did you find that there was no one else to carry it? Come hear how hiking in the back country of New Mexico redefined for me the meaning of commitment, service and accomplishment.



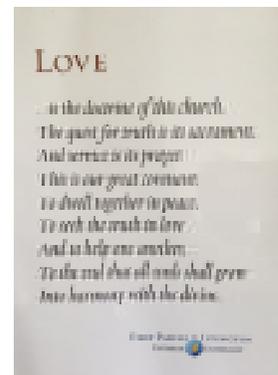
**September Theme:**  
**What does it mean to be a community of covenant?**

**Sunday, September 11**  
**"Ingathering"**  
**Rev. Anne Mason**



Our first worship together will be a time of joyful connection! As we share the waters we bring from our summer — whether it be from a pond, an ocean, or your own kitchen faucet — we will share the dreams we each bring to our beloved community. All are welcome to join us for this multi-generational worship through story, song, and sermon as we come together to celebrate the beginning of our church year.

**Sunday, September 18**  
**"A Covenant of Being"**  
**Rev. Anne Mason**



James Luther Adams has suggested that our society is connected through voluntary associations, bound together by covenant. How can we prepare ourselves to be full partners in the religious covenant which is one of the gifts of our free faith? What do we need to ask from each other to create a church where we can all seek the truth in love?

**Sunday, September 25**  
**"Is It Possible?"**  
**Rev. Anne Mason**



Our Unitarian Universalist faith calls us to hold out hope in this violent world. Hope that our hearts will be tuned to the music of peace. Hope that our communities will dwell together in love. Let us join together to rekindle that spark of hope so that we can share it with this flawed and beloved world of ours.





Dear Friends,

As we join together for our opening worship, we bring our best selves, our best dreams, and our living water from wherever we have been over the summer. Whether you have traveled or continued working, whether you have attended worship through the heat of summer or taken a break from the regular routine, it will be good to be together. I have been waiting for this moment since I last saw you all in May! The amazing energy of the call which you extended to me and which I accepted with hope and with excitement has sustained me during this time of transition for me and for my family.

Together we will discover what it means to be a Community of Covenant as we explore our September worship theme. You are all invited to be a part of this exploration by coming to worship or participating in small group ministry. We are excited to be joining with the wider Unitarian Universalist movement by participating in the Soul Matters study program. Each month material which helps us explore the theme is crowd sourced and made available for individual study or small group gatherings. Our existing Chalice Circles will be using this material, and new groups will be forming for those of you seeking the intimacy of sharing in a consistent group of 10 people meeting once a month.

To be a community of covenant means that we come together to keep faith with the source of all being. We come together, again and again, to remember how to live in a way which reflects what we hold sacred. Even when our hearts are broken, even when our world is spinning, especially when we fear for our lives and our children's lives....we come together to establish, once again or for the first time, that connection which holds us all in the promise of life. Life which is tender and precious, flawed and wonderful. Life which becomes more beautiful in the glow of our relationships. Life which we will explore together as we come together in the warmth of community.

Blessed Be.

*Rev. Anne*



### **Water Communion for Ingathering Sunday**

During the Ingathering Sunday service on September 11th, all are welcome to participate in the Water Communion ceremony. Whether you spent the summer months in your back yard or travelling abroad, please bring a small amount of water in a container.

Let us join together with other First Parishioners for this special service and to welcome everyone back to church!



Even though First Parish is a year-round church, the Ingathering service, held the first Sunday after Labor Day, is the traditional start of the new church year.

This year's Ingathering service will be special, as it is Rev. Anne's first service with us as our Parish Minister. I hope September 11th is on everyone's calendar to help welcome Anne to First Parish, to greet friends, and to welcome newcomers to First Parish.

Speaking of calendars, please see the "Save the Date" notice on the following page. We've set dates for key church-wide events in hopes that you can get those dates into your calendar.

The traditional beginning of the church year is also when your Parish Board holds its annual retreat. This year's retreat (on September 10th) will focus on reviewing Board roles and responsibilities (we have four new Board members this year!); documenting how church decisions are made; discussing Rev. Anne's priorities for the year; reviewing last year's Annual Fundraiser (formerly called "canvass") and what we learned; and identifying two or three overarching goals for the Board this year. I will report back to you on the retreat.

In fellowship,

*Tom*

Here are important dates for the church year. Please add them to your calendar!

September 11th, 10:30 am	Ingathering church service
October 30th, Noon	Fall Semi-Annual Meeting
November 6th, 3:30 pm	Fall Music Concert
November 19th, 7:00 pm	Great Fall Auction
March 26th, 3:00 pm	Rev. Anne Mason's installation
May 7th, 3:30 pm	Spring Music Concert
May 13th, 8:00 am	Mayfair
June 3rd, 9:00 am	Annual Day of Service

### **First Parish Family Fun Pizza Party**

Bring your family and join Rev. Anne Mason and Sadie Kahn-Greene from 5-7pm on Saturday, September 24th. for a fun evening. All ages are welcome to join together to play games, tell stories, eat pizza, and explore more options for family programs this year. For more information and to RSVP please contact Sadie at [skahngreene@yahoo.com](mailto:skahngreene@yahoo.com) or sign up [here](#).

**Social Hour Host List**  
**Jane Beswick, Coordinator**

**Social Hour Host List**  
**Jane Beswick, Coordinator**

First Parish Lexington Social Hour Host List  
September 2016 to January 2017

- 10/30: Meharry, M\* Pedulla, D & Springer, S Meharry, D.  
 11/6: Reuss, B\*, Prusak, L & B, Reuss, D  
 11/13: Pollack, D\*, Pittore, B & R, Roop, M & L  
 11/20: Sinnett, J\*, Platt, K, Rose, D & R, Ryder, P  
 11/27: Schmitz, J\* Scott, B & Walsh, E, Shrum, R,  
 12/4: Siegel, E.\* Soule, B, Stone, B, Tan, J  
 12/11: Tasker T\* Tanner, R, Sturiale, N & Taibi, G, Tasker, P  
 12/18: Barss, V\* Townzen, D, Yen S. & Lee, J  
 12/25: no morning service  
 1/1: Beswick, J tba  
 1/8: Yansen, L\* Whitman, S, Yansen, D, Svenson, E & Jas,  
 E  
 1/15: Adams L\* Adams S & Rich, T, Armstrong, D  
 1/22: Beers-Jones, D\* Anderson, M, Anderson, C, Jones, J  
 1/29: Benson, L\* Smith, P, Bjorklund, J, Brouillette, P,  
 Breiting, A

Dear Members and Friends of First Parish Church,  
 First Parish invites each of you to participate in hospitality by hosting our Sunday morning social hour one time each year. The lead host brings milk for coffee or tea and coordinates with the team; the other invitees each bring refreshments for 30 to 40: (cut up fruit or veggies, crackers & cheese, or sweets. [Full instructions](#) are available on our website and are posted in the kitchenette. The table below lists your invitations for this fall and early winter. Please find your name, mark your calendar, and save this list for future reference.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Lead Host</u>	<u>Invitees</u>
9/11:	Mannix, S*	LeSchack, M, & Wanderer, T, Mulready-Shick, J & Shick, S
9/18:	McKenney, J*	McKenney, B, McGrail, K, Moffatt, P, Noe, C
9/25:	Poage, Joanne*	Morse-Fortier, S & L, Poage, J
10/2:	Myerberg, A*	Myer, A & D, Myerberg, J
10/9:	Nussbaum, C*	Muscolo, G, Nolden, S & T, Nussbaum, S
10/16:	O'Connor, S*	Newhouse, M, O'Brien, J & R
10/23:	O'Hare-Gibson, K	O'Hare-Gibson, R, Oberteuffer, J, Perry-Wood, Z



### First Parish Sanctuary Choir Begins in September

In September, the Sanctuary Choir will resume rehearsing on Wednesday evenings and singing on Sunday mornings. Below is the September choir schedule. If you would like to try us out, please feel free to start coming to rehearsals or to the choir retreat. Choir rehearsals take place in the sanctuary and will be fun and full of music from many genres. All are welcome!

I am always interested in learning who plays instruments in the congregation (as well as singing!). I am available by phone, email, or appointment if you would like to share your musical talents in worship and concerts!

### Choir Schedule September 2016

Wednesday, September 7, 7:30-9:30 PM—first rehearsal

Sunday, September 11, 9:45 AM warm up and 10:30 AM service (Ingathering Sunday)

Wednesday, September 14, 7:30-9:30 PM—rehearsal

Saturday, September 17, 3:00-7:00 PM— mini retreat with potluck supper at First Parish

Sunday, September 18, 9:45 AM warm up and 10:30 AM service

Wednesday, September 21, 7:30-9:30 PM—rehearsal

Sunday, September 25, 9:45 AM warm up and 10:30 AM service

Wednesday, September 28, 7:30-9:30 PM—rehearsal

### First Parish Choir Schedule— Advance Dates

Saturday, November 5, late afternoon and early evening - dress rehearsal for Folk Concert

Sunday, November 6, 1:30 dress rehearsal and 3:30 Folk Concert

Saturday, December 17, late afternoon and early evening - dress rehearsal Solstice Concert

Sunday morning, December 18, Solstice Choral Concert

Saturday, December 24, 6 PM warm up and 7 PM Christmas Eve Service

Sunday Morning, April 16, Easter Sunday

Saturday, May 6, later afternoon and early evening - Broadway Concert Dress Rehearsal

Sunday, May 7, 1 PM dress rehearsal and 3:30 Broadway Concert.



**Children's Choir Rehearsals Begin in Mid September**

Beginning in mid September, the First Parish Children's Choir will meet on Sunday mornings from 11:45 to 12:30 in the Parlor and Sanctuary. They will sing in the morning church services every 6 weeks or so. They will also sing on Christmas Eve, Easter, and in both the fall Folk concert and the spring Broadway concert. The music for the children will be both beautiful and fun and will include music from Broadway, folk, pop, classical, and traditional genres.

The first rehearsal will be **Sunday, September 18 at 11:45.**



**Welcome Our New Alto Soloist, Julia Jaffe**

I am happy to present our new alto soloist at First Parish! Julia Jaffe will begin singing with the choir in September.

Julia was born in Minsk, Belarus, where she attended a specialized music school majoring in piano. At age 15, she immigrated to the USA and pursued dual studies as an opera/classical singer and a linguist. As a singer, Julia had been a lifelong learner.

After completing a BA in vocal performance from the University of Utah, she worked privately with a New England Conservatory teacher as well as Hebrew College Cantor. Julia sang the lead roles with the Lowell Opera House and Commonwealth Lyric Theatre in Boston as well as in the ensembles of Utah Opera House and Opera Tampa. She was a soloist with the Blessed Sacrament Church in Cambridge for nearly 10 years. Currently, Julia is enjoying a stylistically eclectic concert career—she performs programs of Russian and Gypsy romances; Lieder; Hebrew, Yiddish and Ladino songs, opera arias and early music.



Julia Jaffe

Julia believes that performing music in a church is the best way to blend spiritual, emotional, and expressive needs for the singer and listener alike. She aspires to heal and connect through music.

~~~~~

Questions? Please contact Rip Jackson, Director of Music, at [music.fplex@gmail.com](mailto:music.fplex@gmail.com) or 781-862-8200 x 4.

Peace and blessings,

*Rip Jackson*



Welcome back! The LRE Committee is excited to start our programming for adults, youth, and children. There are so many exciting changes to programming this year, and we hope you will find a place to participate.

Below are the details of this year's programming at First Parish. Questions during Lisa Maria's Maternity Leave? Contact Jane Foley, who will put you in touch with the right person to help. Lisa Maria will return from maternity leave in early October.

### **Sunday Mornings for Children and Middle School Youth**

Most Sundays our Spirit Play and Chapel Groups meet, but about once a month (usually in celebration of a holiday or other special observance) we have an All Ages Worship Service when our children attend all of the service with their families. September 11th is our Ingathering of Water Communion and is an All Ages service. Spirit Play and Chapel start on September 18th. Our Nursery is open for babies and toddlers starting on September 11th. If you have not enrolled your baby, toddler, child, or youth yet, please fill out our [Family Enrollment Form](#).

### **Spirit Play for Pre-Kindergarten and First Grade**

For children in Pre-Kindergarten through 1st Grade we offer Spirit Play. This popular Unitarian Universalist program is based in Montessori methods and centers on the medium of storytelling for young children to engage in

spirituality and faith development. Our Spirit Play stories are selected to complement the church's monthly theme. Spirit Play is led by our long time and beloved staff teacher, Michelle Lee, along with the assistance of volunteers. If you feel your child may be more comfortable attending Chapel with the older children, please speak with our Director of Lifespan Religious Education.

### **Chapel for Second Grade through Middle School**

Children 2nd Grade and up through middle school attend the worship service to experience our rituals, traditions, prayer time, stories and music. Chapel participants depart the service just prior to the sermon and gather for Chapel for a time of faith development that includes sharing in fellowship and engaging with the theme or topic of the service that day.

### **Youth Groups and Coming of Age**

Our Youth Groups are ready to start up this Fall. Senior High Youth Group will continue to meet on Sunday evenings at 7:00-9:00PM. Junior High Youth Group meets once a month from 3:00-5:00PM on Sundays. Coming of Age meets twice a month from 5:45-7:00PM on Sundays. For more details on these programs, please contact Katie Camire, Youth Coordinator at [youth@fplex.org](mailto:youth@fplex.org).

### **8th Grade OWL**

Do you have an 8th Grader? Wondering about the Our Whole Lives program? Do you know an 8th Grader in the

community who is not part of First Parish, but the family would like to participate in OWL? This year First Parish is offering OWL fully in-house and welcoming any outside families to participate. Parent Orientation is on October 4th at 7:00PM, and OWL sessions start on Sunday evening October 16th. If you would like to sign up for OWL, please fill out our [Family Enrollment Form](#).

### **Adult Programs**

We are very excited to start up our Soul Matters groups this fall. Previously known as Chalice Circles/Covenant Groups, our small group ministry at First Parish is transitioning into Soul Matters groups. We have openings in groups and also will be starting new ones. Please contact Debbie Armstrong or Ruth Rose if you are not currently part of a small group and want to join one.

Soul Matters groups will be led by a facilitator to engage in our monthly theme. This is a great way to develop deeper connections with the members and friends of First Parish, and dive deeper into how our monthly themes inform us as a community and support you on your personal spiritual journey.

For information on other Adult Programs, including Meditation Groups, Non-Fiction Group, Creative Callings (Fiber Arts Group), and Affinity Groups (Over 80s Group, Unity Group), please visit the website or contact Debbie Armstrong or Ruth Rose while Lisa Maria is on maternity leave.

### **Creative Callings, a/k/a Fiber Arts Group**

All are welcome to participate in an informal group of members and friends who enjoy fiber arts. We gather in the church parlor each second and fourth Thursday from 2:00 pm to 3:45 pm for a low-key time of fellowship and sharing of ideas. Bring a project you are working on — e.g. knitting, crocheting, embroidery, weaving, macramé, beading — or a project you would like to start but need a boost from friends. Just drop by or email Karolyn Eisenstein at [k.eisenstein1@gmail.com](mailto:k.eisenstein1@gmail.com) to join the email list.

### **Fall Potluck Dinners**

Enjoy a good meal? Looking to get acquainted with others in the church, both newcomers and long-time members? Spend an evening with First Parishioners at our popular potluck dinners! Dinners will begin in October, following signups in September.

When you sign up, you will be able to choose which evenings are possible for you, as well as indicate whether or not you could host a dinner. After you sign up, groups of 8-10 people are formed and attendees gather for a potluck dinner in a group member's home on a weekday or weekend evening once a month for four months. The same people remain in each group for each dinner. There are also options for family potluck evenings where children have their own dinner together, separate from the adults.

Questions about fall potluck dinners? Please contact Linda Coyne at [lindatcoyne2@gmail.com](mailto:lindatcoyne2@gmail.com).

## Buildings & Grounds

Dave Pollack, Chair

---

The Buildings and Grounds Committee has been quite busy over the summer, and you may be interested to know what the committee has been up to. B&G members include Jane Foley, Parish Administrator, and Bob Coughlin, Maintenance Coordinator, and a passel of volunteers. It has three teams: Building Preservation and Maintenance, Grounds Development and Maintenance, and Kitchen Management.

This year, B&G received the comprehensive Historic Structures Report prepared by the architecture and historic preservation group Spencer & Vogt. This study was funded by the Lexington Community Preservation Act and by First Parish to act as both roadmap and guidebook for the challenging job of maintaining our 169-year old structure.

The Building Preservation and Maintenance team carefully analyzed this inch-thick document. Fortunately, the study found that the building is structurally sound in almost all respects. The most pressing concerns are repairing and strengthening historic windows, repairing exterior woodwork around the building, and addressing widespread exterior paint failure. Following a required public hearing in early August, the Historic Districts Commission granted approval for the replacement of the basement windows on the exit driveway side of the building. Work on this project, as well as the replacement of rotted wood gutters, is expected to be completed this fall. It may also be possible to address wood rot and paint failure on the front façade this fall. But, much more will need to be accomplished in the coming years to maintain the integrity and beauty of the building.

## Buildings & Grounds

Dave Pollack, Chair

---

The BP&M team, with the help of some parishioners who are not members of the team, also recently completed the relocation of the Music Ministry to the Taylor and Bell Rooms (the two rooms upstairs behind the balcony), including Rip's furniture, harpsicord, files, and a zillion folders of sheet music. This move was accompanied by the relocation of extensive History Committee archives, pictures, and artifacts from the Taylor and Bell Rooms to the first floor room vacated by the Music Ministry.

The Kitchen Management team has worked this summer developing a new plan and updated procedures designed to insure a cleaner, more sanitary kitchen. One aspect of the plan are deep cleanings to be carried out by a professional cleaning company several times a year. The first deep cleaning was very successfully accomplished in mid-August.

For all to see, the Grounds Development and Maintenance team, including the Memorial Garden volunteers, have done splendid work in keeping the garden watered and cared for during this ever so dry summer, and in removing invasive plants, trimming bushes and tree branches, and carting away many truckloads of the resulting debris.

These are but a few of the tasks, big and small, performed on an ongoing basis by the B&G Committee. If you would like to learn more about B&G activities, please contact either Dave Pollack ([joananddavid3@verizon.net](mailto:joananddavid3@verizon.net)) or Toni Tasker ([tonitasker@me.com](mailto:tonitasker@me.com)).

First Parish History & Lexington Tours

The First Parish History Committee, Dan Fenn, and Dave Pollack recently worked together to provide a brief history of the “Meetinghouse on the Green” to the Town of Lexington for use by Liberty Ride and Battle Green tour guides. You might be surprised by some of the facts it contains. For example, did you know that our second minister, the Rev. John Hancock, and our third minister, the Rev. Jonas Clarke, served for a combined total of 105 years, almost one-third of the total time that our congregation has existed?

This brief history was vetted by the Lexington Historical Society and then presented to the Lexington Department of Economic Development on August 17th. Starting on the next page, you can read what tourists from around the country and world will be hearing about our historic meetinghouse.

If you want to learn more about the history of the church and how you can be a part of preserving it, the History Committee is interested in adding new members. If you would like to learn more about the committee’s activities, please call Elaine Turano at 781-861-8064, or email her at [elaineturano22@gmail.com](mailto:elaineturano22@gmail.com).



The Meetinghouse on the Green

This historic church is home to First Parish of Lexington and is its fourth meetinghouse. Built in 1847, it differs in a fundamental way from the first three.

**Question: Does anyone know what makes this meetinghouse different from the earlier ones?**

**Answer: It was built after laws were passed separating church and state.**

In Massachusetts prior to 1833, meetinghouses mostly were used for both religious worship and government business and supported by taxation. This was natural because New England towns were originally settled mostly by people of a single religion. The area that is now the Town of Lexington was a part of the Massachusetts Bay Colony settled by the Puritans.

The first three meetinghouses stood at the apex of the Common, near the place now marked by a stone pulpit behind Lexington’s Minute Man statue. The first meetinghouse was built in 1692 and was a small, unpainted, barn-like building. To keep warm in the cold winters, parishioners brought little metal boxes of hot coals to place by their feet. Men and women sat on benches on opposite sides of the room, girls sat with their mothers, and boys sat in the back of the room.



The first minister served only briefly, as he died soon after being called by the parish. The parish then called the Reverend Mr. John Hancock, grandfather of the John Hancock of Revolutionary War fame. Rev. Hancock served the parish for 54 years.

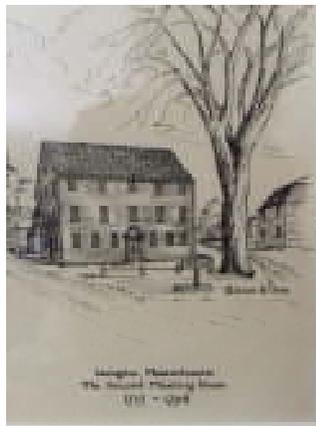
Under his ministry, the parish soon outgrew its first meeting-

## Buildings & Grounds

Dave Pollack, Chair

house. In 1711, the parish raised money to buy one and a half acres behind the meetinghouse for common land, land now called the Lexington Battle Green. It has remained in public ownership ever since.

By 1713, enough families had settled here for the parish to be incorporated as the Town of Lexington. One of the first actions of the new Town Meeting was to vote to build a larger meetinghouse directly behind the first. Both town and parish affairs were discussed, debated, and voted in the meetinghouse. The ministers were paid by the town meeting out of tax money, as were meetinghouse expenses.



The second meetinghouse was plain, 40' x 50', twenty-eight feet high with three tiers of windows, a high pulpit, and no steeple. Instead of rough benches it had high-walled pews. Important news and posters were tacked on its doors. Town and church records were kept in the attic. Town militia supplies were stored there.

History was made in the second meetinghouse. In 1773, the townspeople responded to Boston's refusal to pay unfair taxes by voting "that should the State of Our Affairs require it, We shall be ready to Sacrifice our Estates, and everything dear in life, Yea & Life itself, in support of the common Cause." This solemn Lexington pledge was phrased by the Rev. Jonas Clarke, third Parish minister.

On the night of April 18, 1775, Samuel Adams and John Hancock were sleeping at the Lexington parsonage (Rev. Clarke's home) when Paul Revere rode out from Boston to warn them, and the

## Buildings & Grounds

Dave Pollack, Chair

countryside, that the British were marching.

The second meetinghouse was replaced by a still larger building soon after the end of the Revolution. The third meetinghouse, with a bell tower and steeple, was built in 1794 near the same location on the Green. When the Rev. Jonas Clarke died in 1805, First Parish was still the only religious society in Lexington, and church affairs continued to be conducted in the meetinghouse by church members.



In 1829, First Parish voted to become a Unitarian congregation. Taxes continued to be levied to support the minister and meetinghouse until the practice was determined to violate the constitutional separation of church and state in 1833.

When the third meetinghouse burned to the ground in 1846, First Parish members voted to relinquish all claim to the town's "common land" and bought a lot facing the Green on which it built its fourth meetinghouse. This is the "Meetinghouse on the Green" that you see here today, where history has continued to be made.

