

THE FOCALPOINT

FIRST PARISH IN LEXINGTON
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

In The November 2016 Issue:

November's Theme: What Does It Mean to be a Community of Story?

Special Plate Donation recipient for November—LYFS.
Folk Concert is only a week away!
The Great Fall Auction is coming soon.



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Deadline for December issue, Monday, November 21st.

Worship Services for November

Theme: What Does it Mean to be a Community of Story?



November 6, Rev. Anne Mason "What Gives Us Strength?"

Sharing stories from teenagers involved in Lexington Youth and Family Services, Rev. Anne will explore how we can build healthy networks in our lives. By focusing on stories of strength instead of stories of trauma we make the choice to live our lives with a positive influence.



November 13, Deborah Weiner Soule "Life's Story: Finding Our Place in the World"

There's a myth of who we are that many of us grow up with — heard as children, or in our heads, or from other — and frequently, that story becomes real as we live into our lives as adults. How is it that we can explore other possibilities, in the face of our own doubt and insecurity, and build a new story that we can live out in our troubled world?



November 20, Rev. Anne Mason Thanksgiving All Ages Service

We have much to be grateful for in this time of our church life. All are invited to join us in a time for multi-generational worship, as we express our thanks for the gifts that each person brings to our community. In music, in story, and song, we

Worship Services for November

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offer our gratitude. Come, ye thankful people, come. Worship today is led by Rev. Anne Mason and Lisa Maria Steinberg, Director of Lifespan Faith Development.



November 27, Rev. Anne Mason "The Next Chapter"

As we consider the post-election world, what new conversations do we want to have about public theology? Does religion have a place in our public life, or is it best kept as a private source of comfort and challenge? Can we be open to a new dialogue in our country - or do we just really need a break from the diatribes of the recent national conversation?

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**Interfaith Thanksgiving Service  
Tuesday, November 22nd**

Clergy from the Lexington Interfaith Clergy Association will come together on Tuesday, November 22 for a community worship service at 7:00. The location this year is Pilgrim UCC, located at 55 Coolidge Ave. Join Rev. Anne and members of the community as we offer our gratitude for the simple gifts of Lexington and its beauty and as we honor the leaders of our community. Come and support our choir as they join their voices with members of other congregations in the beautiful anthem "Tis a Gift to be Simple." All are invited!



From Your Minister

“If you've forgotten the language of gratitude, you'll never be on speaking terms with happiness.”

As the nights grow colder and the leaves continue their descent to the earth, our thoughts begin to turn to the upcoming holiday season.

There are many ways we can choose to prepare our homes and our hearts for Thanksgiving. Before we allow ourselves to get lost in preparations, I hope that we all take some time to reflect on the concept of gratitude. For that is the essence of this time of year. Gratitude. The sense that life is a gift.

It is easy to feel grateful for the good things in our lives. We know how to appreciate when someone cooks us a meal, or calls us on the phone just to say hello. We love it when we are invited to go somewhere with a friend, when someone gathers our mail for us, or rakes our leaves, or brings our newspaper up to the front porch. But what about the tougher things in life? Are we grateful for the hard lessons learned when our children struggle in school? Or when our neighbors are fighting with each other and their voices intrude into our silence? Or when our health or our comfort is threatened?

I have found that I can be grateful for some of these experiences by focusing on the via negativa. “That could have

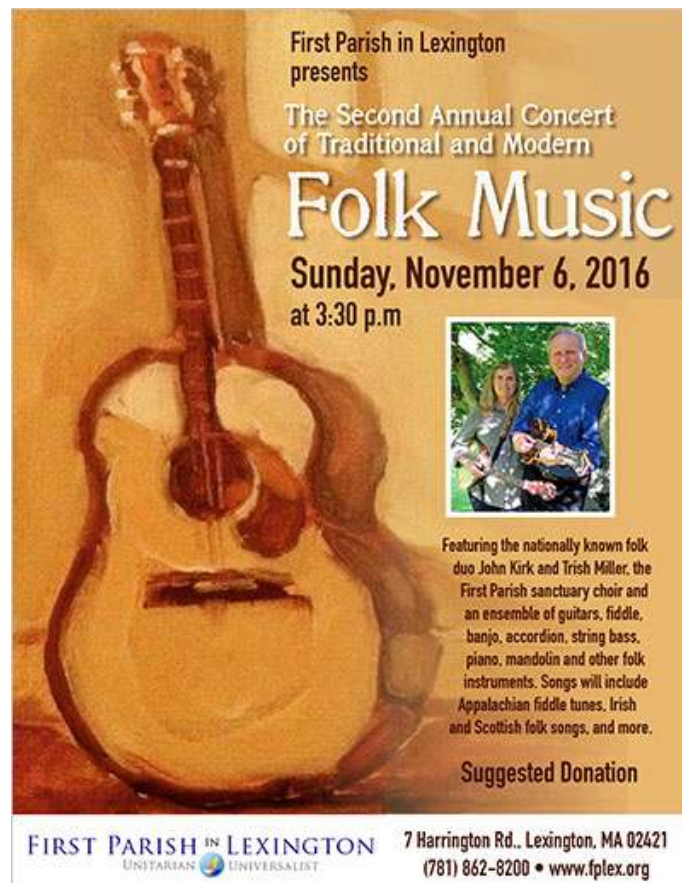
been me in that car accident...” I think to myself as I pass by a car with a crumpled fender. But the tougher lessons in life - those I'm still trying to learn how to appreciate. Some of them I don't appreciate until many years later, when I realize how I have weathered the storm and grown through it. And some I never do feel grateful for because they have been too hard.

I'm not suggesting that we see all things in life as good. For life is filled with difficult things which come our way. I am suggesting a shift in perspective. For it is healthy for us to be people of gratitude. By focusing on what we are grateful for instead of what makes us frustrated and upset, we spend more time in a positive state of mind. This leads us to be more socially aware, to exercise more, and to feel less depressed.

Let us spend time together in the weeks to come practicing the language of gratitude. I am grateful for the beauty of autumn and the approach of the holidays. I appreciate the hot coffee in my cup. I love the snore of my dog Nola as she sleeps in the sun. And most importantly, I am grateful to be here in Lexington with you. I am grateful for this congregation of amazing people, who share the work of ministry. And I am grateful for the warm embrace of this community of faith.

Gratefully,  
*Rev. Anne*

**Folk Concert**  
**Sunday, November 6, 2016 at 3:30 PM**  
**First Parish in Lexington**  
**7 Harrington Rd.**  
**Lexington, MA 02421**  
**781-862-8200**  
**www.fplex.org**



Please come to the annual folk concert and invite your friends! John Kirk and Trish Miller, the nationally known folk duo, will join the First Parish sanctuary and children's choirs for a concert on Sunday, November 6, 2016 at 3:30 p.m.

Directed by Rip Jackson, an ensemble of musicians playing guitars, fiddle, banjo, string bass, mandolin, and other folk instruments will join the vocalists. The musicians will perform music featuring Appalachian fiddle tunes, Irish and Scottish folk tunes, music from the 1960's, shape-note choral pieces, folk trios and solos, and other Celtic music.

Some of the songs, both instrumental and choral, to be featured in the concert are "Ashokan Farewell" (made famous in the Ken Burns documentary, The Civil War), an original shape note setting of "Wayfaring Stranger" and an ancient Celtic lullaby "Enini."

First Parish is handicapped accessible. Parking is available behind the church on Harrington Road. Suggested Donation \$10-\$20 (more if you can, less if you can't).

For more information, call the church at 781-862-8200 x4, or visit [www.fplex.org](http://www.fplex.org).



First Parish is looking for a volunteer to be Communication Lead. I'll describe the duties below, but let me start by giving a big shout out to Jane Eckert, who has served as Communication Lead over the past 18 months. Jane has poured her heart and soul into increasing First Parish's visibility in the community. We all owe Jane a huge thank you for her work.

So now we are looking for a new communication lead who will keep the community informed of what is happening at First Parish. Here are the responsibilities:

- Work with Rev. Anne and the First Parish staff to plan items for external communication.
- Provide project management to the church website team, by identifying needs and issues
- Establish liaisons with local media outlets
- Keep abreast of deadlines for submission to various outlets
- Submit requests to the Town for permits for sandwich boards in the Center
- Submit articles for publication to the Lexington Minuteman and other media outlets.
- Recruit writers for articles and work with in-house editors to polish the article.

This is a wonderful and important opportunity for someone to serve First Parish. Please contact me if you are interested.

*Tom*

This year's Great Fall Auction is on Saturday, November 19. This is a fun social and community building event, as well as an important fundraiser for the church. Here's how it works:

Prior to November 19th:

- Look over the on-line catalog. We will publicize the website link around November 1st.
- If you are unable to attend the auction but want to bid on items, fill out a Proxy Bidding form, by clicking here. Proxy bidding is only available on Live auction items.

On November 19th:

- Doors open at 6 PM. Be sure to get a bidder number at the check-in desk and then move into Parish Hall for finger food and beverages. Contact Lisa Maria at [dre.fplex@gmail.com](mailto:dre.fplex@gmail.com) about childcare.
- From 6 PM to 7:30 PM you can bid on silent auction items in the Common Room. NOTE: Silent auction bidding will end at 7:30 PM.
- Live auction bidding starts at 7:30 PM. This year there will be no intermission.
- At the end of the auction, you can pay with credit cards or checks. Be sure to pick up the items you won!

See you on November 19th! Email the Auction Team with any questions -- [FallAuction@fplex.org](mailto:FallAuction@fplex.org)

The Great Fall Auction Team  
Tom Rich (Chair), Toni and Pete Tasker, and Margie and Bob Gibbons



A busy fall for all at First Parish! We've adapted to new programming for our children on Sunday mornings, kicked off a fantastic year of Youth Groups and Coming of Age programs, welcomed friends of the greater Lexington community into our 8th Grade Our Whole Lives program, had game nights, and renewed many of our beloved Adult Programs such as our meditation group, non-fiction book group, and Chalice Circles, to name a few.

This month on November 20th after service we'll have our first All Ages Religious Education Event. This is for all families~ parents, children, singles, elders, young adults, youth, empty nesters ~ EVERYONE!

For Adult Programs this month, we have a special treat of a workshop on November 5th offered by our own Meg Newhouse, focused on the theme of Legacy from her recent book, Legacies of the Heart.

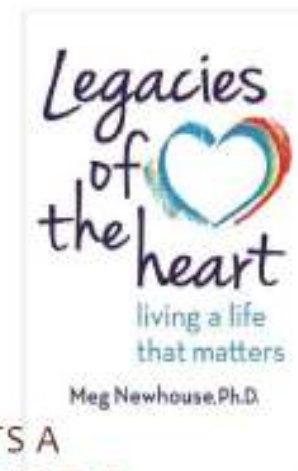
In sad news, this fall we said goodbye to our long-time employee and loved member of the Religious Education Staff Team, Michelle Lee. After more than 16 years, we said goodbye to Michelle and wished her well in her move to Florida to pursue opportunities there. Michelle has cared for and taught the youngest of our church family over the years in a professional and kind way. We will miss her very much.

A final note- Thank you again to everyone for your support and love as my family welcomed my son this summer. This

congregation and the staff are AMAZING, and you should be very proud of creating a welcoming and supportive work environment for a working parent. I feel very blessed to work for First Parish in Lexington.



FIRST PARISH  
IN LEXINGTON PRESENTS A  
**LEGACY WORKSHOP**



**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup>**

**9:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

7 HARRINGTON ROAD  
LEXINGTON, MA 02420

Please join Meg Newhouse, Ph.D. as she leads a half-day interactive workshop on living as legacy—the ongoing imprint of one's life and gift to future generations. Participants will explore the legacies they have received and those they have already "bequeathed."

The workshop will be a self-contained overview based on Meg's new book, Legacies of the Heart: Living a Life That Matters.

**ALL WELCOME TO REV. ANNE MASON  
LUNCHEON TALK**

The Rev. Anne Mason will be the guest speaker at the November 14 meeting of the Unity Group. She will share some of the experiences that led her to the ministry in what she describes as a “circuitous route.” Attendees will be invited to share some of their experiences also. All are welcome to attend the lunch and program—or either of the events—as guests, no reservations necessary. Social time 12:00, Lunch 12:30, Program 1:30.

The Unity Group is a very active, inclusive and supportive group of women from First Parish and the wider community who met once a month for lunch, companionship, and a program. Men are also welcome to attend or join. Members provide the lunch and all are welcome to attend, to get acquainted with the Group and better acquainted with Rev. Anne.

Save the Dates! The monthly Unity Group programs for the year are as follows:

- |             |                                      |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| December 12 | Rip Jackson—His Music, His Garden    |
| January 9   | Ashley Rooney—Fairy Homes & Gardens  |
| February 13 | Cammy Thomas—Emily Dickenson         |
| March 9     | Regie O'Hare Gibson—Music and Poetry |
| April 10    | Barbara White—Impressionism          |
| May 8       | TBA                                  |
| June 12     | Programming for Next Year            |



The collection plate on Sunday, November 6th will go to LYFS, Lexington Youth and Family Services, the free accessible teen counseling center housed at First Parish. LYFS operates in partnership with the Lexington Public Schools. Two First Parish members, Connee Counts, Co-President, and Anne Khudari, Clerk, serve on the Board.

Besides the counseling center, Lexington Youth and Family Services brought an upstream, evidence-based suicide prevention program, Sources of Strength (SOS), to Lexington High School in 2015. In its second year, SOS been building a community of caring teens and adults in Lexington. Two members of the LYFS Youth Board, Emily Zhang and Bill Gao, will discuss the work they are doing at Lexington High School.





The Social Action Committee co-sponsored an event with other faith communities of Lexington at the Follen Church last Sunday, October 23. The program was devoted to homicide prevention.

Chaplain Clementina Chery, president of the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute of Dorchester, spoke on her personal experience as a survivor and her professional mission to transform society's response to homicide. She is pictured here with several members of First Parish.

Program coordinators from the Intergenerational Justice Program spoke about working with families on both sides of homicide to create opportunities for healing, reconciliation, and accountability. They will led a participatory discussion about ways partners can do their own healing as well as support the peacemaking work. The seven-mile Mother's Day Walk for Peace from Dorchester to Boston City Hall this past May attracted more than 15,000 people.

Exuberant Abstractions: Spreading Joy - paintings by



Amantha Tsaros will be on display October 1 through November 30 in The Gallery at First Parish Church. Amantha is a Lexington resident with a BFA & MFA from the School of Visual Arts, New York, NY.

Artist Statement about Exuberant Abstractions: Spreading Joy

Heartbreak, Happiness, and a wish for a more joyous world. My goal is to create forcefully joyous paintings that can't be ignored. These are bold, loud, opinionated pieces of optimism that grow out of my passionate desire to drown out the negativity and darkness and absurd bullying that are heaped on us at an ever-increasing rate and ear-splitting volume these days. Let's drown it all out with Love, Joy, Optimism, and Happiness. Ultimately, art is undoubtedly a dare. To allow yourself to laugh—loudly and shamelessly. To give yourself permission to let your liveliness loose in a field of hot pink wildflowers. And to realize, then accept, that you deserve pure, undiluted joy.



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, 2nd 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.



November Events

Wednesday, November 2nd

Adult Program for New Empty Nesters, 7:30 p.m.,  
Common Room

Saturday, November 5th

OWL Retreat, 9:00 am, Parker Hall  
Legacies of the Heart Workshop, 9 am, Common Room  
Folk Concert Rehearsal, Saturday, November 5, 4 pm,  
Sanctuary

Sunday, November 6th

Folk Concert, 3:30 pm, Sanctuary

Saturday, November 12th

Munroe Saturday Night, 7:30 pm, Sanctuary

Sunday, November 13th

Jr. High Youth Group, 3:00 pm, Parker Hall  
Coming of Age, 5:45 pm, Parker Hall

Thursday, November 17th

80-plus Luncheon, 12:30 pm

Friday, November 18th

Roaring Jelly, 7:00 pm

Saturday, November 19th

The Great Auction, 6:00 pm

Saturday, November 20th

Coming of Age, 5:45 pm, Parker Hall  
OWL, 6:30 pm, Common Room