

THE FOCALPOINT

FIRST PARISH IN LEXINGTON
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

November 2017 – What Does It Mean to be a Community of Abundance?

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Deadline for December issue: Wednesday, November 22nd

Worship Services for November
What Does it Mean to be a Community of Abundance?



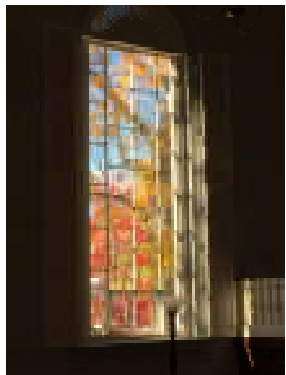
November 5
Rip Jackson, Music Director
Music Sunday

The music program at First Parish will celebrate the church's 325th anniversary year. The sanctuary choir with guest soloists, trumpets, recorder, percussion and French horn will present diverse compositions celebrating the sacred spirit and lasting legacy of First Parish's outreach to the community through music. The service will feature music by Rene Claussen, Franz Joseph Haydn, J. S. Bach, Ivan Moody, Joan Szymko, David Dickau and Rip Jackson.



November 12
Rev. Anne Mason
"Keep Only What Gives You Joy"

Sometimes our Abundance feels just a bit too....abundant. Whether we are collecting, maintaining or lessening our possessions, our relationship to the 'stuff' of life is complex.



November 19
Lisa Maria Steinberg, DRE
"What We Need is Here"

As we prepare for the Thanksgiving holiday, come to church and be with us in the here and now. This All Ages service will celebrate some of the many ways we engage with the Sacred—through ritual, song, poetry, and being in community.

Worship Services for November
What Does it Mean to be a Community of Abundance?



Tuesday, November 21
Lexington Interfaith Clergy Association
"An Evening of Gratitude and Affirmation of Our Community."

All are invited to the 2017 Annual Lexington Town Thanksgiving Service. This is a town event and open to people of faith, no faith, and everyone in-between. Please gather at 7:30pm at the Grace Chapel Sanctuary, 59 Worthen Road.



November 26
Rev. Anne Mason
"The Language of Gratitude"

There is an old saying that says "if you have forgotten the language of gratitude, you will never be on speaking terms with happiness." What is it about practicing the habit of gratitude that actually makes us happier? In the troubled world in which we live, it is important to spend some time reflecting on that for which we are truly grateful.

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

The Time Has Come!

The Celebration of First Parish's 325th Birthday Is Upon Us!



Come one! Come all! It's time to celebrate the 325th anniversary of First Parish in Lexington! Please come to the following exciting events we have planned!

Reception for the Exhibition of First Parish Documents on Thursday, November 9, from 5:00 -9:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall. The exhibit begins with our founding covenant, and contains copies of many original documents throughout our first century and beyond, along with artistic and photographic depictions of our

buildings up until the present. It also covers the church's role in three wars, the Revolution, World War I, and World War II, and the 1971 protest on the Green against the Viet Nam War. At 6:00pm, Lexington historian Sam Doran will lead a Question and Answer session in the sanctuary for people of all ages, and at 7:30pm he will give a lecture and lead a discussion on our history. There will be cider and doughnuts.

Thursday, November 16, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. Washington and Jefferson Dialogue on the Issues of Church and State. George Washington and James Madison will discuss the issues of church and state. Come and hear the views of two of our early presidents on an issue which still troubles us today. The event is free and open to the public, but seating is limited, so please get tickets either at the church office or at Wales Copy Shop.

The Time Has Come!

The Celebration of First Parish's 325th Birthday Is Upon Us!

Sunday, December 3:

10:30 Worship Service. Led by Rev. Anne, Lisa Maria, and Rip.

12:00 Colonial Lunch. Catered by Chris Bateman of Lexx Restaurant. For members and friends of First Parish. The fees cover the lunch and the afternoon program, and are \$20 for adults, \$10 for children.

2:00 Bell-Ringing at the Old Belfry, Clarke Street and Massachusetts Avenue, opposite Cary Memorial Library. Followed by a procession to the church which will stop briefly at important sites on the Green, including the monument with the inspiring words of the First Parish Minister Jonas Clarke, who served the church throughout the second half of the eighteenth century.

3:00 "325 and Counting: A First Parish Historical Drama," written by Don Cohen and presented in the sanctuary. An account of our "removal" from Cambridge, our founding, our first building, and a brief overview of key moments in the church's life. Period music will be provided by Rip Jackson. Tickets for those who did not attend lunch are \$10 for adults, \$5.00 for children and youth, and are available through the church office.

There is still time to volunteer: please watch for an on-line volunteer sign-up sheet to participate in the activities as a reception host, usher, ticket taker, lunch server, lunch cleaner, etc. for these three events.

From Your Minister

What does it mean to be a people of Abundance? Here at First Parish we are celebrating the Abundance of years—we will spend the month of November looking backwards at our 325 years of being here on the Battle Green, and try to get a sense of what that has meant to our congregation, to Lexington, and to our country.

And at the same time, like the ancient Roman god Janus, we will also be looking forward—to vision who we want to become. We want to both see how we have been shaped by our history, and see how we want to shape the history that has not yet happened. Together with your Parish Board, we will be engaging with you in many conversations about our future together.



There are not many Unitarian Universalist congregations who can look at their history with as broad a scope as we can. I'm excited to hear the debate between Madison and Washington as we face changes to the relationship between church and state as it affects health care, employment and immigration issues. I'm eager to learn from Sam Doran about the role that our church has played in local and national politics. And I'm really looking forward to sharing a colonial meal with you and ringing the bells in the Belfry before we listen to Don Cohen's original drama about our congregation.

Our newly gleaming steeple is rising proudly over the green once again. Let us rise as well, with vision and with a sense of our own possibility, as we explore together what it truly means to be First Parish.

In faith,
Rev. Anne

In this fractured age the voices of people of color have been silenced for far too long. How can we learn to lift up these voices, and explore the ways in which our participation in society has contributed to racism?

One of the most challenging and important questions which we should be facing is this: What are we doing to dismantle white supremacy in our congregation?

Announcing a new and exciting program for First Parish in Lexington, in collaboration with First Parish in Concord. Mark your calendars for Saturday mornings in February and March:

Beloved Conversations is an experiential curriculum developed by Dr. Mark A. Hicks, that provides a space to reform/fuse the brokenness of racism into new patterns of thought and behavior ushering in social and spiritual healing. New ways of being are learned through the actions of conversation and probing dialogue.

The program consists of a 1.5 day retreat that launches the curriculum, followed by 8 weeks of guided dialogue/experiential exercises. Each session in the 8 week curriculum is two hours, and highly structured. The retreat is facilitated by a trained Fahs Collaborative staff person, the following eight sessions are facilitated by members of the congregation running the program. The work is done in small groups of 10-12 participants.

If you are passionate about this work and would like to be a facilitator, please contact Rev. Anne.



A Note from the Parish Board

David Rose, co-chair

After the highly successful First Phase of the Capital Campaign (thanks to David Bovet, the Capital Team, and especially to the 40ish families who contributed), the Board is directing its attention to what should be its primary work: planning for the future of First Parish. One part of that future is planning for the Second Phase of the Capital Campaign. But to prepare for that, we need to do two things.

First, it is clear that articulating a clear mission for the church's future is vital for the health and success of the church generally, and for the next phase of the Capital Campaign specifically. What is our core purpose in this community and the larger world? What kind of building, spaces, and facilities, do we need succeed with that mission?

Having a clear message that is agreed upon and understood by the congregation will help the Board to make policies and decisions that uphold the mission of the church. As such, we will be working to identify "open questions" that will be shared with the congregation. These questions will guide our planning for the church year, and strategic planning for the future. The Board will hold a series of small group sessions in order to discuss these open questions, which will be used in divining and describing our church mission and goals. This articulation of who we want to be in the world and what we want to do in the world will inform decisions about how to use our building, what programs to support and where to focus our efforts and resources in order to be impactful with our mission.

Second, we need a well-organized and effective approach to achieving our goals, our mission. At present, there are various ambiguities and gaps in the ways that our professional staff

A Note from the Parish Board

David Rose, co-chair

and lay members work together, leading to difficulties in making decisions and in carrying them out. As a board, we recognize that we have a responsibility to revisit and reformulate the policies that guide our church's governance so that we can all be more effective. We will spend time this year in doing that, seeking to make policies and procedures more transparent and objective in order to maximize time on our mission and pastoral issues rather than administration of the church.

In both of these matters – mission and governance – we will be working with Dan Hotchkiss, author of the highly successful book, *Governance and Ministry*, as our guide and mentor.

Lastly, we are delighted that the congregation nominated and approved Marty Kvaal to join the Board for this important work. We are all delighted and look forward to the work with her and with you.



The Great Fall Auction Saturday, November 18th

The Great Fall Auction—an amazingly fun church-wide event and important fundraiser for the church—will be on Saturday, November 18th, at the church. The evening includes a silent auction (from 6-7:30 PM), a live auction (starting at 7:30 PM), highly entertaining guest auctioneers, and food and beverages. Contact Lisa Maria to reserve child-care.

As of this writing, the deadline for donating items has passed, but we still need a few more donations. If you'd like to donate something, please email FallAuction@fplex.org.

To volunteer to help with the auction or if you have any questions, email FallAuction@fplex.org. There are an assortment of opportunities to help with the auction, including helping with food and beverages, setup, logistics during the auction, and cleanup.

Stay tuned for more information on the auction. See you on November 18th!

Tom Rich

On behalf of The Great Fall Auction team -- Toni and Pete Tasker, Margie and Bob Gibbons, and Tom Rich



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

Lifespan Religious Education Programming Needs YOU!

The Lifespan Religious Education Programming is looking to invigorate current programming, find support for current programs, and add some new programs! Could you help in one of these ways?

Lead a Sunday Morning Adult Ed group 9:00-10:00 on a variety of topics/themes of interest to you (facilitator training provided!)

Join our Nursery Volunteer Team to be on the rotation for the 4th Sundays of the month

Bring your special talent or topic of expertise/passion to Sunday School Primary Class or Chapel group

Organize social action opportunities for families of all ages and sizes (including families of singles, empty nester families, families with youth, families with young kids)

Have an idea for Lifespan Religious Education programming that you are excited and passionate about leading? Facilitator training and other support is available!

Contact Lisa Maria Steinberg, Director of Lifespan Religious Education with how you can share your gifts with the First Parish community.



Music Sunday at First Parish
Sunday, November 5 at 10:30 AM

The music program at First Parish will present a special "Music Sunday" celebration on Sunday morning, November 5th as part of the church's 325th anniversary year. The sanctuary choir with guest soloists, trumpets, recorder, percussion, and French horn will present diverse compositions celebrating the sacred spirit and lasting legacy of First Parish's outreach to the community through music. The service will feature music by Rene Clausen, Franz Joseph Haydn, J. S. Bach, Ivan Moody, Joan Szymko, David Dickau and Rip Jackson. For more information, visit www.fplex.org.



Sarasa Chamber Music Ensemble
Sunday, November 19 at 3:30 PM

Sarasa Chamber Music Ensemble, founded by cellist Timothy Merton in 1997, is delighted to have a new home for its regular season of concerts at First Parish in Lexington, in addition to the Friends Meeting House in Cambridge. Thanks to the incredible support of Rip Jackson, music director, and the community at First Parish, Sarasa feels completely rejuvenated by the move. The chamber group's first outing took place in September with a program based on the music of Georg Philipp Telemann, performed on period instruments.

November's set, entitled **SACRO-PROFANUS**, will be an opportunity to hear the duality of the human spirit displayed in a program of music that captures the essence of earthly pleasures and that of a pious nature.

Sarasa is excited to welcome back tenor Frank Kelley, who will perform Arvo Pärt's celestial "Wallfahrtslied" (or "Pilgrim's Song") for tenor and string quartet. Pärt's style of composition, sometimes termed as a trend in "European mysticism" or "holy minimalism," is firmly rooted in elements of early music and the Eastern Orthodox tradition of chant. Works by Vivaldi and Buxtehude continue this quest of the spirituality in humankind, and are contrasted with the more robust delights of the 17th-century Austrian composer and esteemed violinist Johann Heinrich Schmelzer, who made great use of a compositional tool of this era, called *Musica representativa*. Sarasa will perform his "musikalische Fechtschul" (or "musical fencing school"), composed in 1668, which vividly portrays a sword fight, as well as the final soothing bath in which the two swordsmen go to heal their wounds. The second half of the the program is devoted to Schubert's beloved 'Rosamunde' string quartet, a work that straddles both the sacred and the profane, and captures this dichotomy Schubert investigated and searched for throughout his life.

Don't miss this special event! Sunday, November 19, 2017 at 3:30 pm, First Parish in Lexington For more information, please visit www.sarasamusic.org or telephone 617.429.0332

UU MASS ACTION STORY SLAM & FUNDRAISER

The 4th annual fundraiser for UU Mass Action will take place on **Saturday, November 4th**, 7:00 – 9:00 PM at the First Church Unitarian, Littleton, 19 Foster St. This year we another fabulous line up of 6 storytellers! Our emcee is 2015 storyteller finalist, Rev. Robin Bartlett, Senior Pastor, at First Church in Sterling, MA, a multi-denominational church affiliated with the UUA and the UCC. Light refreshments will be served. Tickets \$40.

FOOD FIRST SUNDAY

Please bring a nonperishable food donation for the food basket that will be placed in the sanctuary on **Sunday, November 5th** to benefit Lexington Food Pantry and help feed hungry people in Lexington. Donations can also be left in the basket outside of the church office.

DAVID BILLINGS ON WHITE SUREMACY AND UNDOING RACISM

First Parish Concord and the Phillips House (a historic house that was originally owned by a former slave) are co-sponsoring this free talk and book signing by David Billings, the author of *Deep Denial: The Persistence of White Supremacy*, on **Sunday, November 5th** at 3:00pm, 20 Lexington Road, Concord.

David Billings has been an anti-racist organizer and trainer with The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond since 1983. He is an ordained United Methodist minister and a historian, and he has worked with hundreds of educational, human service, criminal justice, and faith-based groups around the country. He will speak about the pervasiveness of white supremacy throughout our culture and institutions, and how it can be undone.

**THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE
PANEL & POTLUCK**

Join the First Parish Church of Waltham on **Wednesday, November 14th** from 6:00pm to 8:00pm for a potluck dinner and compelling discussion about the immigrant experience in Waltham. Bring a dish from your culture or heritage! Hosted by First Parish in Waltham and WATCH CDC. RSVP to office@watchcdc.org.

SPECIAL PLATE COLLECTION

Special Needs Arts Programs, Inc. (SNAP)

On **Sunday, November 19th**, Heidi O'Mara, director of SNAP, and Margaret Counts-Klebe will present information about SNAP, Inc., whose mission is to provide "people with disabilities opportunities that celebrate each person's unique abilities while cultivating creative expression, building peer relationships, and fostering self-esteem through life-enhancing activities in the arts." All non-pledge donations received will be given to SNAP to help fund this important program in Lexington.

WINTER COAT DRIVE

More information will be forthcoming about our annual Winter Coat Drive which benefits WATCH, Waltham Alliance to Create Housing, a Community Development Corporation. Please put aside any winter coats that you no longer wear. They should be clean and in good condition.

DAY OF SERVICE

This year's Day of Service will be held on **Saturday, June 2nd**. Please save the date for this day of action when we help out the church and the great community.

It's Not Too Early! Poinsettia Order

It's time to plan for a festive sanctuary this holiday season! First Parish will be accepting orders for poinsettias from Wilson Farm beginning on Sunday, November 5th.

The cost is \$10.00 for a 6 1/2" pot, with proceeds going towards the purchase of greens and other items for holiday decorating of the church. Order forms and payment (cash or checks made payable to First Parish in Lexington) are due on Thursday, November 30th. Orders will not be accepted without payment.

After the Christmas Eve services, you may take your poinsettia home. If you'd like your plant to be in honor or in memory of someone special, please include a message. These will be printed in the Christmas Eve order of service.

Please contact the church office with any questions. Thank you!



Recurring Events Calendar November 2017

Choir Warm-up, Sundays, at 9:30 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 2:00 p.m.

Parish Board, monthly, 2nd Tuesday, at 7:00 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, 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, at 1:30 p.m.

Thursday Meditation, Thursdays, at 4:00 p.m.



**Special Events Calendar
November 2017**

**Thanksgiving
By Edgar Albert Guest**

Saturday, November 4th

OWL Retreat, 9:00am, Parker Hall
Tom Peterson Memorial Service, 11:00am, Sanctuary
Choir Rehearsal, 2:00pm, Sanctuary

Sunday, November 5th

Music Sunday, 10:30am, Sanctuary

Thursday, November 9th

Historical Document Exhibit Opening, 5:00pm, Parish Hall

Monday, November 13th

Unity Group Luncheon, 12:00pm, Parker Hall

Wednesday, November 15th

80+ Luncheon, 12:30pm, Parker Hall

Thursday, November 16th

Madison/Washington Dialogue, 6:00pm, Sanctuary

Friday, November 17th

Roaring Jelly, 7:00pm, Parish Hall

Saturday, November 18th

The Great Fall Auction, 6:00pm, Parish Hall

Sunday, November 19th

Sarasa Ensemble Concert, 3:30pm, Sanctuary

Monday, November 20th

LYFS Board Meeting, 7:00pm, Parker Hall

Tuesday, November 21st

Lexington Interfaith Thanksgiving Service, 7:30pm,
Grace Chapel

Thanksgiving

By Edgar Albert Guest

Gettin' together to smile an' rejoice,
An' eatin' an' laughin' with folks of your choice;
An' kissin' the girls an' declarin' that they
Are growin' more beautiful day after day;
Chattin' an' braggin' a bit with the men,
Buildin' the old family circle again;
Livin' the wholesome an' old-fashioned cheer,
Just for awhile at the end of the year.

Greetings fly fast as we crowd through the door
And under the old roof we gather once more
Just as we did when the youngsters were small;
Mother's a little bit grayer, that's all.
Father's a little bit older, but still
Ready to romp an' to laugh with a will.
Here we are back at the table again
Tellin' our stories as women an' men.

Bowed are our heads for a moment in prayer;
Oh, but we're grateful an' glad to be there.
Home from the east land an' home from the west,
Home with the folks that are dearest an' best.
Out of the sham of the cities afar
We've come for a time to be just what we are.
Here we can talk of ourselves an' be frank,
Forgettin' position an' station an' rank.

Give me the end of the year an' its fun
When most of the plannin' an' toilin' is done;
Bring all the wanderers home to the nest,
Let me sit down with the ones I love best,
Hear the old voices still ringin' with song,
See the old faces unblemished by wrong,
See the old table with all of its chairs
An' I'll put soul in my Thanksgivin' prayers.