

THE FOCALPOINT

FIRST PARISH ^{IN} LEXINGTON
UNITARIAN  UNIVERSALIST



In The October 2016 Issue:

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- * Is There a Women's Group at First Parish?
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Deadline for November issue, Monday, October 24th.

Worship Services for October

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



October 3, Rev. Anne Mason "Don't Tell Me Not To Fly!"

At the beginning of the High Holy Days, we celebrate the music and the faith which Jewish refugees brought to America. How is it for our refugees now? What would it be like if we were to truly make room for people of all faiths—encourage them to be themselves fully, in this culture, rather than asking them to assimilate? How would our culture be better for it!



October 10, Rev. Anne Mason "Doors of the Heart"

In this time of national division, how can we keep our hearts open to those with whom we disagree? What does psychology teach us about the difference between the liberal and conservative approach to politics? Is it possible to find a way to find common ground across the political divide, or will we remain mired in opposition and immobility?



October 16, Rev. David S. Blanchard "Hope for the Past"

Most of us find it easy to blame our troubles on the past. Any sentence that begins "If only..." hauls our focus backwards as if we could take back time and spin it forward in a different fashion. I

Worship Services for October

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would ask, "how's that working for you?" In this sermon I'll invite you to find a source of healing in the sufficiency of what was.



October 23, Rev. Anne Mason "A Holy or a Broken Hallelujah"

Leonard Cohen is one of our modern prophets. His song "Hallelujah" encourages us to find healing by singing in the midst of love or in the midst of pain. What will it take us to be able to stay connected to that which is greater than us? Can we find kindness within conflict?



October 30, Rev. Anne Mason "Samhain Multi-generational Worship"

From the earliest times people have found ways to honor their loved ones. From Samhain to Halloween to All Souls Day we celebrate our connections to those who have come before us. Please bring a photo or small object which reminds you of a loved one or loved pet, and participate in our ritual of love and remembrance. Worship today is led by Rev. Anne Mason and Lisa Maria Steinberg.



From Your Minister

Our theme in October is “What does it mean to be a community of healing?” This may sound like an impossible dream as our nation continues the negative conversations being dredged up in this election season. The difficulty of

this campaign leads us to a visceral understanding that healing is vital and necessary for our future as a country founded on American ideals of equality and possibility for all. But before the healing can begin, we must face certain things together. And that is the tough place we find ourselves now. Thankfully, we are a community which encourages us all to explore these things together. We are not isolated individuals going it alone — we have each other to share, to question, to mourn, and to celebrate the gifts that life itself has given us.

If you are looking for a safe space in which to question and explore, then consider becoming part of a Chalice Circle. New groups are being formed this month with sign-ups at coffee hour every Sunday. Chalice Circles new and old will be using the Soul Matters material to study spiritual themes which have relevance for us as seekers of truth. The joy of this is in bonding together with a small group once a month, to create what Parker Palmer calls a “Circle of Trust.” As he describes it:

“So what do we do in a circle of trust? We speak our own truth; we listen receptively to the truth of others; we ask

each other honest, open questions instead of giving counsel; and we offer each other the healing and empowering gifts of silence and laughter... Our purpose is not to teach anyone anything but to give the inner teacher a chance to teach us.”

I encourage you all to take a chance and enroll in the Chalice Circles program. Existing Circles will continue to meet and make room for new people as they are ready to do so. New groups will be forming, and we will be looking for new facilitators to help run these circles. All facilitators will meet together once a month with me, to support each other and learn from each other about how to deepen the experience of being in a Chalice Circle. Our world is one in which people are becoming more and more isolated from each other. Perhaps our most important practice in learning to be a Community of Healing is to join together in small groups, to listen deeply to your own voice and trust that you will be able to share your own wisdom - and to hear the wisdom of fellow members of our Parish when we need to find our way.

May the beauty of the autumn heal your spirits when you are in need. May the cooler days give you energy to do the work you must do. And may the glorious colors of the turning leaves remind you of the beauty that lives within each one of us. Blessed Be.

Rev. Anne



Have you ever wondered how decisions get made at First Parish? Do things seem mysterious? In my five years on the Board, I've heard on more than one occasion that a lack of transparency on decision making processes is a problem. This year's Board is taking that seriously and is drafting a "How Decisions are Made at First Parish" document. The Board hopes this effort will not only lift the veil on decision making, but also serve as a valuable training and reference guide for staff and lay leaders.

The document will have sections on staffing (e.g., "Who decides who is hired to fill a part-time or temporary staff position?"), finances (e.g., "Who decides how much the church is allowed to spend in a year?"), committees (e.g., "Who decides who will serve on a committee?"), building use (e.g., "Who decides whether an outside group can rent space inside the church?"), events (e.g., "Who decides whether First Parish will participate in an outside event sponsored by another organization?"), vendors and contractors (e.g., "Who decides we can enter into an agreement with a vendor or contractor?"), and our public face (e.g., "Who decides whether we display a banner or flag on the outside of the building?").

Following Board, staff, and Finance Committee review, we will share a draft document for congregation review and comment: are there important decisions missing in the document? should the current process for making a partic-

ular decision be changed?

In the spirit of openness and transparency, ,

Tom

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**The Great Fall Auction**

This amazingly fun church-wide event and important fundraiser for the church is scheduled for November 19th. Please save the date! The evening includes a live auction, silent auction, highly entertaining guest auctioneers, and food and beverages. Childcare will be available.

To make this event successful, we need folks to:

- \* Donate auction items. Popular items include dinners and tastings hosted at parishioner's homes, stays at parishioner vacation homes, and hosted special events.
- \* Volunteer to help with the auction. The auction doesn't just happen by magic! It takes many hands, and there are an assortment of opportunities to help with the auction, including helping with food and beverages, setup, logistics during the auction, and cleanup.

More information on how to donate items is forthcoming. In the meantime, please direct questions, donations, and offers to help to [fallauction@fplex.org](mailto:fallauction@fplex.org).

The Great Fall Auction team — Toni and Pete Tasker, Margie and Bob Gibbons, and Tom Rich

IS THERE A WOMEN'S GROUP AT FIRST PARISH?  
Yes! The Unity Group is a very active, inclusive, and welcoming group of women from First Parish and the wider community who meet once a month for lunch, companionship, and a program. Men are also welcome to join or come as guests. Members provide the lunch — no reservations necessary — just come as a guest, if you would like to get acquainted with the Group .

The first meeting of the new season will be on Monday, October 3rd with social time at 12:00, lunch at 12:30, and the program at 1:30. The program for October is:

**This Is Who We Are!**

Would you be willing to tell us something about yourself?

...a memory from your childhood? ...a favorite pet? ...a special relationship? ...an adventure?

It doesn't need to be happy, it can be happy, or sad, or even scary!



Stay tuned for upcoming meeting announcements, including November's guest speaker, Rev. Anne Mason!



**Lotsa Helping Hands**  
CREATE COMMUNITY

Coordinators Celine Nussbaum and Deborah Beers are happy to report that the Caring Community of First Parish in Lexington is off to a good start! Our website on [lotsahelpinghands.com](http://lotsahelpinghands.com) now has 44 members! Since May eight members have already volunteered to give rides or meals to fellow First Parishioners through this website! This is a great opportunity to lend a hand to someone who needs it in the congregation by offering to take them a meal or give them a ride.

For initial access to our privately-listed Caring Community page on [lotsahelpinghands](http://lotsahelpinghands.com) it is necessary to go through one of the Coordinators or their substitutes by emailing them at [caringcommunity@fplex.org](mailto:caringcommunity@fplex.org) or calling First Parish at (781) 862-8200. Please call or write if you are interested!



In Good Company presents  
"Hail to the Chief"  
Saturday October 15th, 7:30pm  
First Parish Sanctuary  
Tickets \$15 (10% discount Early Bird Special)



In Good Company will present "Hail to the Chief" at First Parish on Saturday, October 15th, 7:30 pm in the Sanctuary.

This will be a rousing and delightful musical about presidential campaign songs--before there was Queen or Katy Perry, candidates and their supporters had to write their own promotional tunes. You may have seen White House Chair, which was a solely choral performance. Hail to the Chief takes everything great about that show and brings it to another level, so come see the transformation for yourself! Journey back to a simpler time with us when Donald's

ancestors still went by Drumpf and the only way people could insult each other was with pen and ink.

As a special treat, there will be an opening act, a performance by the Lexington High School Jazz Combo, playing selections from the Great American Songbook.

Tickets are normally \$15, but for a limited time, you can take advantage of our Early Bird Special and get a 10% discount on ticket purchases! For tickets go to: <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2603643>.

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Folk Concert

Sunday, November 6, 2015, at 3:30 PM
Free Will Offering

First Parish in Lexington will present a free concert of traditional folk music on Sunday, November 6, 2016 at 3:30 PM in the sanctuary. The famous folk duo, John Kirk and Trish Miller, will join the First Parish sanctuary choir, along with an ensemble of guitars, fiddle, banjo, accordion, string bass, piano, mandolin, and other folk instruments. The musicians will perform folk music featuring Appalachian fiddle tunes, Irish and Scottish folk songs, music from the '60s, shape-note choral pieces, folk trios and solos, and other Celtic music.

A free will offering will be taken. For more information call the church at 781-862-8200 ext. 4 or visit www.fplex.org.



Sunday Mornings for Children and Middle School Youth

Most Sundays our Spirit Play and Chapel Groups meet. For children in Pre-Kindergarten through 1st Grade we offer Spirit Play, the popular Unitarian Universalist program based on Montessori methods and centered on the medium of storytelling for young children to engage in spirituality and faith development.

Children 2nd Grade through middle school attend the worship service until departure just prior to the sermon so they can experience our rituals, traditions, prayer time, stories, and music. Chapel is a time of faith development that includes sharing in fellowship and engaging with the theme or topic of the service that day.

Our Youth Groups are up and running. Senior High Youth Group meets 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.

If you have not enrolled your baby, toddler, child, or youth yet, please fill out our [Family Enrollment Form](#).



Youth Programs Up and Running!

September was full of start up fun for our Youth Programming! On the weekend of September 24–25, we had our first official Junior High Youth Group meeting where we embraced the beautiful autumn weather played games out on the Green and brainstormed activities for the rest of the year including field trips and service projects. We also started our exploration of what Coming of Age will look like this year with the parent and youth orientation.

Our Senior High Youth Group embarked on the annual fall retreat at the Barbara Harris Center in NH the weekend of September 17–18. On the retreat we participated in the low ropes course which included a climbing wall, dug deep to write a SHYG mission statement, and enjoyed s'mores around the campfire!

Do you have a youth in middle school or high school that's interested in joining youth group or Coming of Age? Please contact Katie Camire, Youth Coordinator, for more information at youth@fplex.org.

Volunteer Opportunity!

We're looking for some more adult advisors to round out our teams. If you're interested in empowering youth to be compassionate leaders, engaging youth in social outreach, and having fun please contact me for more information! (Must be 25 years or older)

First Parish to Host New England UUA

Leadership Conference

Looking for an exciting opportunity to help out our UUA district and learn all about church leadership — **for free?**

We are excited to be hosting the New England Region UUA Leadership Workshop: Cracking the Leadership Crisis, on Saturday, October 22nd from 10 am to 3 pm.

Three to five hospitality volunteers are needed to help throughout the day: in the morning for set up, during lunch break, and for clean up. Volunteers will be able to attend the workshop for free. Information about the workshop is below.

If you are interested, please email [Jane Foley](#) in the office or call her at 781-862-8200 x1.

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Church leadership is not all it's cracked up to be. Too often, leadership looks like paying bills, reviewing minutes, and making decisions that at least some people won't understand, and many people won't even know about.

At its best, church leadership is a profound experience of spiritual deepening. Bring a team to join other congregational teams in exploring how to:

- Release worry and anxiety about burnout and having “not enough” volunteers
- Anchor leaders in a profound sense of purpose
- Make leadership a personal growth experience
- Restructure church infrastructure to focus on meaningful work
- Liberate the energy of collaboration and covenanted community

We encourage your team to continue the workshop's strategic conversations once you return home.

[Click here to learn more about the workshop.](#)





**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.  
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.



**October Events**

Memorial Garden Annual Service, Sunday, October 2nd,  
11:45 a.m.  
Unity Group, Monday, October 3rd, 12:00 p.m.  
OWL Parent Orientation, Tuesday, October 4th,  
6:30 p.m.  
Congregational Conversation, Sunday, October 9th,  
11:45 a.m.  
Adult Program for New Empty Nesters, Wednesday,  
October 12th, 7:30 p.m.  
In Good Company Concert, Saturday, October 15th,  
7:00 p.m.  
Committee Fair, Sunday, October 16th, 11:45 a.m.  
New England UUA District Leadership Workshop,  
Saturday, October 22nd, 10:00 a.m.  
Game Night, Saturday, October 22nd, 5:00 p.m.  
Annual Meeting, Sunday, October 30th, 12:00 p.m.