

THE FOCALPOINT

FIRST PARISH IN LEXINGTON
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

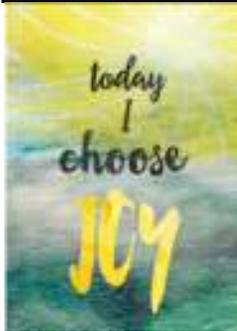
April 2018 — What Does It Mean to be a Community of Emergence?

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NOTICE: Beginning in June 2018, the Focalpoint will be published quarterly. The May issue will be sent next month, followed by the Summer issue in June and the Fall issue in September.

Worship Services for April

What Does it Mean to be a Community of Emergence?



April 1
Rev. Anne Mason
"Cultivating Joy"

On this Easter Sunday, Rev. Anne Mason will be speaking on "Cultivating Joy."

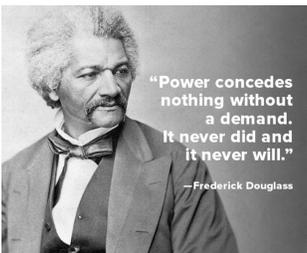
"Joy", said Archbishop Desmond Tutu, "is much bigger than happiness. While happiness is often seen as being dependent on external circumstances, joy is not." Let us gather on this Easter Sunday and rediscover the seeds of joy in our lives, in our religious teachings, and in each other. The Easter music will be festive music celebrated with choir, soloists and brass. All are welcome!



April 8
Senior High Youth Group
"Hope Taking Root"

In this engaging service for the whole congregation (all ages) members of the Senior High Youth Group ask us to nurture hope in uncertain times. Our amazingly talented youth offer a service filled with music and

personal reflections.



April 15
Rev. Helen Lutton Cohen
"Giving Up Power"

The great black abolitionist Frederick Douglass said: "Power concedes nothing without a demand; it never did and it never will." Our own church was

founded in 1692 and was the only formal religious institution in Lexington until 1833, when Follen Church and the First

Worship Services for April

What Does it Mean to be a Community of Emergence?

Baptist Church formed, and Massachusetts became the last state to establish the separation of church and state. Imagine what must it have been like for our spiritual ancestors, when our building burned down in 1846, to accept rebuilding OFF the Town Green, to lose town funding, to see more and more religious groups establish themselves here—to give up our position and power!



April 22
Rev. Anne Mason
Earth Day

As we face the damage done by Climate Change, we know that we must do something as a nation. All of what we can do as a town, as a congregation, and as individuals must begin with one thing. We must learn to have reverence

for the Earth, for the Earth is indeed our 'Blue Boat Home.'



April 29
All Ages Worship
"Project Joy"

All throughout April we have been participating in 'Project Joy' as we have made flags and collages and collected stories of our own personal experiences of joy. Come and be uplifted by the collective joy we will share together in this All Ages service.

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

April brings us to a point of hope and expectation - we know that Spring is lurking somewhere under the muck - we know, in our memories at least - that tulip bulbs are already aiming their green shoots upwards - that daffodils and crocus may be buried still, but we trust that they will emerge and delight our senses with their brilliant colors. We need color and light and warmth, and we too must trust that these points of beauty will come forth.

In a world which aches for the spring, we remember the words of poet Denise Levertov:

But we have only begun to love the earth
We have only begun to imagine the fulness of life.
How could we tire of hope?
so much is in bud.

Our upcoming month together is full of opportunities for us to imagine new life - to celebrate the warmth and the color of our community, and to honor the Earth. Come and celebrate the arts as you enjoy Missa Gaia. Come and participate in the Climate Action Team and help us work to make this earth a healthier place. Come and realign yourself with reverence for our planet on Earth Day.

And keep watch. New life is emerging, and with it, new hope for a fecund world of beauty and life-giving bounty.

In faith,
Rev. Anne



First Parish in Lexington presents
Paul Winter's *Missa Gaia*:
A Mass for the Earth
Friday and Saturday
April 13-14, 2018, at 7:30 PM
Pre-concert drumming at 7:15 PM
Earth Fair & Reception in Parish Hall
after the performances

First Parish in Lexington will present Paul Winter's *Missa Gaia: A Mass for the Earth* on Friday and Saturday, April 13-14, 2018, at 7:30 PM. This profound work, under the musical direction of Rip Jackson and theatrical and dance direction of Maris Wolff, will be a collaboration between the First Parish sanctuary and children's choirs, the Vermont Dance Collective, and a world music ensemble of percussionists, guitar, piano, electric keyboards, soprano sax, oboe, cello, and bass. Integrating world music with songs from tundra wolfs, canyon and musical wrens, harp seals, a flight of loons and singing humpback whales to celebrate the whole earth as a sacred space, the *Missa Gaia* was commissioned by the Dean of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine as a contemporary ecumenical Mass for the Earth. There will be an Earth Fair and reception featuring Lexington environmental organizations in Parish Hall after both performances.

Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$20 seniors and \$15 for students. Reduced ticket prices are available for those in need. Visit fplex.org where tickets can be purchased, at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/missa-gaia-a-mass-for-the-earth-tickets>, or by calling the church office at 782-862-8200.

Throughout the month of April we want to build, share, and experience a more joyful community.

How do we plan to do this? By inviting everyone – youth, young adults, “regular” adults, millennials, X-gens, boomers, senior+ – to share with us something representing a moment of joy you recently experienced. It could be a picture of a bird you saw, the name and lyrics of a song you heard, a copy of a piece of music you listened to, the name of a book you read or a copy of a poem, a copy of a quotation, the name and/or picture of a play or musical (Missa Gaia) you saw, or of a walk you took, some thoughts you had regarding a piece of art you saw or sound you heard, a photo of a flower you smelled, the name and picture of a game you played, a sample of a piece of cloth, ribbon or yarn you held, and even something you remembered or imagined.



Please bring your joyful representation (more than one item is welcomed) to church throughout the month of April and add it to our Joyful Collage (see beginning stage of our Joy Collage on the left). You will also have an opportunity to make a Joy Flag which together with the Joy Collage will be on display in the Parish Hall and Sanctuary.

On the final April Sunday service on the 29th, we will share stories, music, our Joy Collage and Flags with everyone. It will be a fun and joyous occasion.

Two events at the end of March prepared CAT for First Parish’s April theme of Joy. At the CAT meeting on March 25th, it was decided to continue to meet every two weeks without a “not another meeting” feeling, only the joy of working together. Please join us on Sunday April 8th after worship. We have divided our work so you can choose your focus on either State and National Legislative issues or Local and First Parish initiatives, or both. Look for specific ways to get involved in the Weekly Update or contact Stephen Shick stephenshick04@gmail.com or Bob Kvaal <mailto:bkvaal@gmail.com>

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CAT’s words to help move our spirits to joy:

*“This is the true joy of life. . .being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one. . .I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community. . .Life is no brief candle to me. It’s a sort of splendid torch which I’ve got to hold up for the moment and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.” ~George Bernard Shaw*

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CAT members at the Interfaith Exodus from Fossil Fuel action in front of the Capitol. The message to Governor Baker was clear: Stop all new fossil fuel projects and take bold leadership to create a renewable energy infrastructure.



Report from the Board

David Rose & Katie O'Hare Gibson, co-chairs

The primary responsibility of the Board in any organization is to plan for its future. The First Parish Board is heavily engaged right now in planning for both short and long-term aspects of the church's future.

In the *short term* (i.e. for the remainder of this year), individual members are playing leadership roles in planning for such things as a revised Mayfair, Voices on the Green, Beloved Conversations, the continuing improvements in Buildings and Grounds, and many others.

For the *long term*, members of the Board—through key teams such as a Governance Task Force and a Task Force on Mission and Impact measurement—are focused on ways to improve the governance and effectiveness of the church to carry out its mission-related work for many years ahead.

For the *intermediate* term, the Board's primary responsibility is to prepare for next year. That typically means the setting annual mission-relevant goals, choosing strategies, priorities, and resources for reaching those goals, and identifying how success will be measured and monitored. One of the most obvious expressions of that planning process comes in the annual budget that is proposed to the whole congregation at the Spring semi-annual meeting which will be held on Sunday, May 20th.

Two committees of the Board have already begun the hard work of preparing that budget. The Finance Committee provides leadership in this area by preparing the information, expertise, and guidance we need to generate a budget proposal that is a careful balance of fiscal optimism and realism for our future. The Stewardship Committee provides the other kind of leadership: raising the funds that we will need to ultimately support the programs and services the budget proposes. (If you

Report from the Board

David Rose & Katie O'Hare Gibson, co-chairs

have not yet made your generous pledge for the future of this church and its mission, they would love to hear from you.)

The entire Board, however, has another key role. Our responsibility (working with the ministerial staff) is to set the goals for our programs and services of next year, trying to “discern” what will be the best investments of our valued resources, our staff, and our volunteers. Choosing good investments is fundamental not only to our budget and our mission for next year, but to our long-term viability and impact on our community.

In that vein, much of the last Board meeting focused on what kinds of investments we should make in our *religious education programs* – an area of focus raised as especially important during the Imagination Cafés. Lisa Maria Steinberg joined us to make sure we had an accurate and comprehensive view of the history of religious education in our own church but also to apprise us of current trends (and demographics) in the faith development of children and youth in the broader world. That was extremely helpful for all of us.

Next meeting, we will focus on that topic again, this time trying to set goals that will have the largest impact possible on our youth and young families next year, but that will also help to ensure the overall long-term financial health and vitality of our congregation.

We will be guided in our discussions by what we heard in the Imagination Cafés, but we also welcome you to join us at that meeting or to convey your thoughts to us through Board chairs David Rose or Katie O'Hare Gibson. We look forward to your own investments—both financial and personal—in the future of this parish.

Updates from the Social Action Committee

First Parish's Social Action Committee is an active and engaged committee. All are welcome to join us on the third Sunday of the month at noon in Parish Hall to find out what we're doing and how you can get involved. Below are updates from the committee:

Thanks to the generous donations from the congregation during the **Syrian Refugee Clothing Drive**, 31 hefty bags filled with outerwear, blankets, stuffed animals, and socks were delivered to the distribution and shipping site in New Hampshire.



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The **Good Samaritan Fund** committee has identified four recipients from the first wave of applications. Deadline for the second wave is May 1. Awardees will be notified by June 15. If you know of individuals in need, please review the description on the First Parish website, along with the application form and other requirements.

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Thanks for your diligent writing, 167 letters were written and mailed for **Amnesty International** on behalf of prisoners of conscience.

Updates from the Social Action Committee

The next dates to help unload the food trucks for **Fair Foods** at the UU Urban Ministry in Roxbury will be March 31, April 28, and June 2 (annual service day). This is a fun activity for everyone, families, youth, etc. We pack bags with fresh vegetables, fruit, salad mix, bread, etc., and these are subsequently distributed at several food pantries in the city. We usually meet in the FP Lex church parking lot at 9:45 AM on Saturday and return by 1 PM. Please contact Elaine Hylek, if you would like to sign up for one of these Saturdays. We will car pool into the city together.



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April's **special plate collection** will take place on Sunday, April 22nd. All non-pledge donations will go to Lexington Refugee Assistance Program (LexRAP).

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Please mark your calendars for our **Annual Day of Service** on Saturday, June 2. All members of First Parish and their families are invited to participate. A wide spectrum of activities will be available to all ages. In previous years, some opportunities to participate included



helping with the Lexington Interfaith Garden, Lexington Food Pantry, Communities Without Borders, and The Douglas House. The day will begin at 8 AM with a meeting with a team leader and breakfast. Most activities will wrap up around 12 or 12:30. Hope to see you there!

Imagination Café & Pledge Drive Celebration



On Friday night, April 27th at 6:30PM in the Parish Hall, the Board and the Stewardship Team invite all members and friends to an evening of socializing, entertainment, and imagining.

Celebrate the end of the pledge drive, with finger food, wine, beer, and other beverages!

Hear from the Board on what we learned from the January and February Imagination Cafes!

Participate in another round of Imagination Cafe discussions!

Hear closing night entertainment!

All ages invited!



PFLAG Support Group

Starting in May, there will be a PFLAG Support Group here at First Parish.

Support groups are safe and welcoming spaces where you can meet with other parents and caregivers who are also supporting LGBTQ children and adult children.

This group will meet once a month, is run by trained volunteers (who are parents themselves), and are filled with people who can offer support, answer questions, and link you to resources. Whatever information you share will be confidential.

If you are interested in joining the group, please email Lexingtonsupport@gbpflag.org or ask Lisa Maria for more information.



Mission Statement

Greater Boston PFLAG works to create environments of understanding so that all people can live with dignity and respect through:

Support: to cope with an adverse society
Education: to enlighten the public
Advocacy: to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights

Greater Boston PFLAG provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

Gun Violence Prevention Forum
Co-sponsored by First Parish and Follen Church

Gun Violence – Action, Truth, and Reconciliation: A Conversation with Attorney General Maura Healey, Chaplain Clementina Chéry, and two youth activists. Sunday, April 8, 2018, 3:00 to 4:30 pm. Temple Emunah, 9 Piper Road, Lexington. Free and open to the public.

The Follen Church Gun Violence Prevention Group plans a racially inclusive forum on gun violence prevention and healing. Inspired by the response of the Lexington High School students to the recent school shootings, they want to give voice to the students' concerns (#LexingtonSaysEnough, the LHS group promoting safe schools, is a co-sponsor of the program).

In addition, they want to inform the community about existing gun safety laws and to highlight the work of the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute in the Roxbury/Dorchester area where the focus is on gun violence prevention, peace promotion and support and healing for families of victims of gun violence. The Peace Institute's Mother's Day Walk for Peace is an annual march through Boston that draws upwards of 20,000 people.

The four panelists will be Emily Weinberg, founder of the LHS student group, now with 300 members; Attorney General Maura Healey, who will describe existing Massachusetts and Federal gun safety laws; Chaplain Clementina Chéry, President of the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute and a youth activist who works with the Peace Institute. Rev. Claire Feingold Thoryn, minister of the Follen Church, will be the moderator. Each panelist will speak for ten minutes. A question period, primarily for students, will follow.

Lexington Youth and Family Services
METCO Documentary Presentation

All are invited to attend a presentation co-sponsored by LYFS and First Parish:

METCO Documentary Film, "On the Line: Where Sacrifice Begins" on Saturday, April 28, 2018 from 5:30 to 8:30 at First Parish Church, 7 Harrington Rd, on the Green in Lexington.

Created by Mike Mascoll, a Lexington METCO graduate, this film documents the birth in 1966 of METCO, which is the oldest voluntary desegregation program. It highlights the METCO program through the experience of both METCO and Lexington families and discusses why METCO is still such an important and beneficial program in Lexington today.

Barbara Hamilton, METCO Director at Lexington High School said, "Now more than ever our country is at risk of being divided again. This story stands as an example of how we can still come together."

Following the film, there will be a panel of METCO parents, alumni, current students and educators. Light refreshments will served.





With sadness we announce the death of Barbara Ciampa on Friday, March 16th. Barbara was a beloved member of First Parish for many years, and shared her volunteer talents in many ways, including the 80s plus group. She was well known in Lexington for her many activities, and was awarded the Minuteman Cane in 2008. She will be sorely missed. Barbara was an avid listener to NPR and remained informed about current events. Because she lived with terrible pain for the past few years, we are glad that she has finally found peace, but I know that I will miss our visits and our conversations about travel, music, politics, and First Parish. She loved this church and the members here, and I often brought her love and greetings from all of you.

I am grateful that I was able to spend time with her the morning of her death. Please keep her children Cynthia and Peter in your hearts. The memorial service has not yet been scheduled but will happen at First Parish sometime in the coming months.

Sincerely,
Rev. Anne

Celebrate Spring at Ferry Beach on Memorial Day Weekend!

Join kids and adults, friends and families old and new from First Parish in Lexington and First Parish in Concord at our annual Memorial Day Weekend retreat at Ferry Beach in Saco, Maine!

From Friday night through Monday afternoon, both kids and adults have fun exploring nature as it unfolds next to the seacoast, plus great food, music, and clear sea air. Kids and kids-at-heart will enjoy marshmallow roasts, sand castles, birding, board and outdoor games, bicycling, and of course, croquet are all part of the weekend!



Stay in Ferry Beach's rustic buildings (named for famous Unitarians) or camp in your tent or trailer in the nearby Grove. Walk to the lovely outdoor chapel in the pines, explore Saco and the pretty Camp Meeting villages, or just nap in a rocking chair.

Registration begins in April, and we welcome you, first-timer or experienced 'beacher', to this adventure. Questions: email Deb Weiner Soule (djweiner101@gmail.com) or Elisabeth Jas (svenjas@email.msn.com) or talk to other experienced beachers including: Erik Svenson, Ben Soule, Dave Cannon, Cheryl Keenan, Jim Slack, and Lisa Maria Steinberg – to name just a few! See you on the Beach!

Interfaith Garden Diggings and Doings

It's spring at Lexington's Interfaith Garden, located just opposite the church parking lot. Volunteers from a dozen faith communities in town work together in the Garden during the spring, summer, and fall. This is our 9th year, and so far we have donated more than 12 TONS of organic produce for Lexington's Food Pantry!

This month, we're off and digging—preparing the soil and maybe even planting peas, lettuce, and beets—the cool weather crops.

YOU are cordially invited to participate in this interfaith gardening effort. No experience needed! You are welcome to come occasionally or on a regular basis or to come by and just check us out. Children, youth, and adults—all are welcome. Community service hours available for high school students.

We learn a lot! We make new friends! We have fun! Do contact Cherie Noe or Marty Kvaal, the coordinators for First Parish, if you wish more information or would like to be on the volunteer list. Do come!



Mayfair is Coming! Mayfair is Coming!

Mayfair is coming soon...on **May 12!** We invite you to come, to help, to bring your stuff and friends and children!

Please visit the piano on Sundays to sign-up to share your talents: Like to dress up? Help at the Jewelry table. Savor good coffee? Brew the best at the Coffee bar. Need something special for Mother's Day? Check out the Collectibles table. Are you a neat-nik? Push a broom during clean up. There's something for each of us.

We are looking, too, for irresistible items in these categories:

Treasures and Collectibles: china, artworks, silver, furniture, small furniture;

Jewelry: jewelry of all kinds, handbags, scarves, and small purses;

Books: fiction, literature, current nonfiction, and children's books. PLEASE: no travel, self-help, reference books.

White Elephants: Pottery, kitchenware, linens, small furniture, knickknacks, frames, small appliances, tools, electronics in working order, art & craft supplies, gift items, holiday decorations;

Toys, Games, and Puzzles: clean & in good condition;

Home-baked (no nuts) items: your favorite breads, muffins, cookies, brownies/bars, biscotti, cupcakes, granola/muesli, fudge.

But please, NO donations of old, torn, stained, broken items, and

No firearms

No exercise equipment

No worn-out or outdated sporting goods

No large pieces of furniture

No broken items

No household chemicals

No clothing or shoes

No televisions

No monitors, desk-model, or old computers

No air conditioners

No tape cassettes or videotapes

No magazines or textbooks

Remember a day you felt your life change?



If you do, you may be ready to be one of the storytellers for First Parish's next Voices on the Green. Our popular evening series of live music/storytelling/TED-Talks returns on Friday, June 6th when our theme will be "The Day My Life Changed." Perhaps you have a good (true) story to tell your friends and neighbors in the com-

munity (212 people came to the last show) about some life-changing event, decision, or person that happened one day some time ago and that still affects you now. Perhaps it was the day a child was born or lost, the day you started or stopped drinking, the day you found religion or lost it, the day you had an epiphany or your first orgasm (no, maybe we're not ready for that one), the day you were accepted to college or dropped out, the day you tried too hard, the day you realized that you wouldn't be playing for the Red Sox, the day you first felt true joy, the day the music died. Whatever it is, we would love to hear about it. Or you may want to recommend someone else's story to us. In either case send an email to drose@cast.org or speak to one of the Voices on the Green Committee members – Deb Lapides, Helen Cohen, Regie O'Hare Gibson, Lee Brami, Laura Juitt, or David Rose.

Thursday, April 5th

Missa Gaia set-up begins

Sunday, April 8th

Missa Gaia rehearsal, 1:00pm, Sanctuary

Monday, April 9th

Unity Group Luncheon, 12:00pm, Parish Hall

Thursday, April 12th

Missa Gaia Dress Rehearsal, 6:30pm, Sanctuary, Parish Hall, Parlor

Friday, April 13th

Missa Gaia, 7:30pm, Sanctuary

Saturday, April 14th

Missa Gaia, 7:30pm, Sanctuary

Monday, April 16th

Dan Fenn Presentation, 12:00pm, Sanctuary

Tuesday, April 17th

80+ Luncheon, 12:30pm, Parker Hall

Sunday, April 22

Newcomer Drop-In, 12:00pm, Parlor

Friday, April 27

Imagination Café & Pledge Celebration, 6:30pm, Parish Hall

Saturday, April 28

LYFS METCO event, 6:30pm, Parish Hall

