



Weekly Update

Wednesday, December 19, 2018

First Parish in Lexington

Worship Service at 10:30 AM

Sunday, December 23, 2018

All-Ages No-Rehearse Pageant



On the Sunday before Christmas, we will gather as a community to sing familiar and beloved carols, celebrate the season through word and music, and enjoy the "No-Rehearse Nativity Pageant", which will be a part of our service. All are welcome to participate – children, youth, and adults. Parts are cast in real time as we craft the Nativity Story together. Join us for this fun and celebratory telling of the Christmas Story!

The sanctuary choir will sing Z. Randall Stroope's beautiful acapella anthem "All My Heart This Night Rejoices." They will also sing Dale Grotenhuis's arrangement of Daquin's baroque organ Noel "Let Our Gladness Know no End" with Rip Jackson playing the 18th century organ part. The children's choir will join them in singing Peter, Paul and Mary's joyful "Children Go Where I Send Thee!" with soloists Chris Hess, Amy Johnson, and Jamie Willis. Julia Jaffe, Elisabeth Jas, Toni Tasker, and Elizabeth Walsh will sing Linda Spevacek's thrilling acapella ladies quartet "Merrily We Sing." And Sarah Matthews, Katherine Rose, and Ruth Rose will play medieval and renaissance trios on bamboo pipes.

This is an all-ages service. Grades Pre-K through eight will stay in the sanctuary. The nursery will be open for infants and toddlers.

Trigger Warning From Your Minister

This is the time of year when our old favorite customs come out in full force. We love to make our favorite recipes, hang our favorite ornaments on the tree, and watch the movies that have delighted us for generations.

Such was my desire this week when Simon and I sat down to watch an old movie called *Holiday Inn*. It had been a long day, and we were both looking forward to an hour or so of escaping into the delights of Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire.

All was going well in their mixed up world of New York City floor shows, high fashion, and the reality of the performers whose lives are centered on making the rest of us feel nostalgic. I truly do love the dancing, and who can go wrong with the music of Irving Berlin? All was delightful until that moment in the movie when Bing needs to find a disguise so that his dancing partner will not be seduced by the temptations of Hollywood. He decided to do a musical number...in black face. Ouch. Watching a man cover up his partner's face in dark makeup was bad enough - but then to see an incredibly painful song and dance imitating the suffering of the enslaved Africans of the old south....Oh my. It was horrendous.



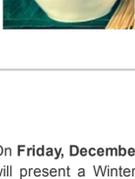
I'm sure that I had seen this movie many years ago, but I truly did not remember this scene. What a sign of my indoctrination into the white supremacy culture of the world in which I grew up. I do not remember what I thought of it then, but I can tell you that our experience watching it this time was one of extreme discomfort. And just as uncomfortable for me is the realization that I accepted this back when I was a child, and I do not remember talking about it to anyone. It was just one of those performance moments which we take on as part of the larger culture. White folk performing in black face was an accepted thing. But it is not OK anymore, and we must make sure that if we do choose to watch these old movies with our children, that we include a primer about the racism that was, and is, a part of our culture. If you have not seen the movie or the series *Dear White People*, this might be a good time to start, because it tackles the modern phenomena of white folk dressing up in black face on college campuses. It was and is still a controversial topic.

As we take time in this holiday season to enjoy our old traditions, let us make sure that the customs we pass along to our children will truly be the ones by which we want to be remembered. And perhaps we need to start new traditions - full of humility. Let us hope for a humanity that might truly experience equality for men and women of all colors and hues and shapes and sizes. Let us rejoice in the full beauty of who we are as the diverse and colorful people we truly are.

May your holidays be truly joyous - for you and for who we hope to be.

Blessings and love,
Rev. Anne

Among Our Own



With great sadness we mourn the death of John Nickles. John and Marjorie joined First Parish last year, but John's poor health prevented him from attending regularly. John was a brilliant engineer known for his work on the Apollo mission. A gentle and compassionate man, he and Marjorie loved to sing in choirs. Marjorie is singing with the First Parish choir. He will be greatly missed by his wife, children, and grandchildren. His memorial service is planned for January 12 at 2:00 pm.

Winter Solstice Experience

On **Friday, December 21**, First Parish in Lexington will present a Winter Solstice Experience at 7:00 pm. With music, ritual, candles, dancing and darkness, we will experience the quiet of the longest night, and welcome the sun as we wait for her return. Led by Rev. Anne Mason and Music Director Rip Jackson, this will be a worship service exploring earth-centered imagery, with an invitation to cherish the darkness.

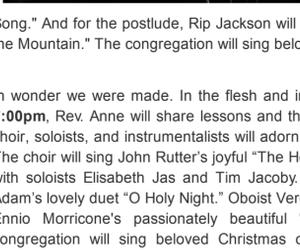


You are invited to set aside your frenetic everyday concerns and take this hour for your own inward journey. The Solstice is honored by indigenous religions around the world and we will have music, dance and poetry which honor many traditions.

The interfaith sacred dance group Skyloom will offer two dances as they bring light into our shared space. We are honored to also present Don Alberto Taxo, who is a Master Iachak from the Andes of Ecuador, a high-ranking shaman or medicine man, recognized for this highest honor by the Shamanic Council of South America. A diverse group of musicians will provide beautiful Solstice-themed music including soprano sax, vocal soloists, string bass, piano, organ, electronic synthesizer, rain stick, gong, Tibetan singing bowl and other atmospheric musical instruments.

Also participating will be Lisa Maria Steinberg, Director of Religious Education and Family Ministry, with other youth and adult volunteers. Free and open to the public parking is in the rear of the church. For more information call 781-862-8200 or visit www.fplex.org.

Christmas Eve Services



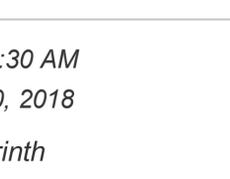
At 5:00pm, come gather together with Rev. Anne to celebrate the joy of Christmas with story and song, carols and candles. Youth and children singers and instrumentalists will provide the seasonal music for worship. The children's choir will sing Ruth Elaine Schram's lovely "Lullaby." The teen and college choir will sing John Williams' joyful "Christmas Star" (from *Home Alone 2*). Cecilia Kvaal will sing Alfred Burt's poignant "Some Children See Him." For the centering music, bass clarinetist Jordan O'Hare Gibson will play a jazz arrangement of Mel Tormé's "The Christmas Song." And for the postlude, Rip Jackson will play an energetic jazz arrangement of "Go Tell It on the Mountain." The congregation will sing beloved Christmas carols during the service.

In wonder we were made. In the flesh and in love. What is the meaning of the Incarnation? **At 7:00pm**, Rev. Anne will share lessons and thoughts of the mystery of Christmas. The sanctuary choir, soloists, and instrumentalists will adorn the worship service with beautiful Christmas music. The choir will sing John Rutter's joyful "The Holly and the Ivy" and his ethereal "Candlelight Carol" with soloists Elisabeth Jas and Tim Jacoby. Elizabeth Walsh and Julia Jaffe will sing Adolphe Adam's lovely duet "O Holy Night." Oboist Veronica Kenney and horn player Erik Svenson will play Ennio Morricone's passionately beautiful "Gabriel's Oboe" (from *The Mission*). And the congregation will sing beloved Christmas carols during the service and on the front steps afterwards.

Holiday Schedule

The church office will be closed from Monday, December 24th through Tuesday, January 1st. Staff will return on Wednesday, January 2nd refreshed and ready for the new year! If you have a pastoral emergency during this time, please contact Rev. Anne Mason at minister@fplex.org or 717-475-5596.

The next Weekly Update will be published on Wednesday, January 2nd. Please submit information for programs and events by Monday, December 31st.



Worship Service at 10:30 AM

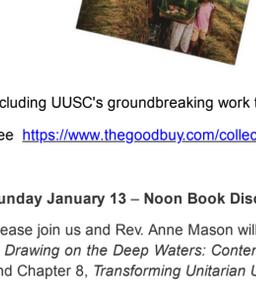
Sunday, December 30, 2018

Walking the Labyrinth

Our new Lexington Labyrinth will be open this morning for you to engage in walking meditation. Come and explore your inner journey as you walk the ancient path of the labyrinth. Set your intentions for the New Year. Come and take some time to engage with your own spiritual path in the company of your fellow seekers.



Climate Action Team



Stop at the CAT display during fellowship hour after worship and learn more about *A Planet for the Children Initiative*. Join us at the next CAT meeting **January 6th** after worship.

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) is our faith based international organization that works on the "intersectionality" of human rights and climate change issues. CAT encourages you to consider making a Climate Action Gift to support their work this holiday season. Gifts fund the UUSC's efforts in global human rights work, with a particular focus on advancing environmental justice for climate action, including UUSC's groundbreaking work to address the effects of climate-forced migration.

See <https://www.thegoodbuy.com/collections/symbolic-tribute-gifts/products/climate-action-gift>

Sunday January 13 – Noon Book Discussion

Please join us and Rev. Anne Mason will lead a discussion of *Justice on Earth* focused on Chapter 7, *Drawing on the Deep Waters: Contemplative Practices in Justice-making* by Kathleen McTigue and Chapter 8, *Transforming Unitarian Universalist Culture* by Pamela Sparr.

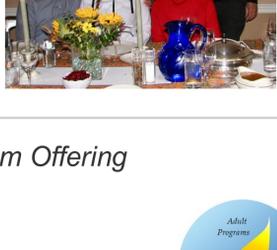
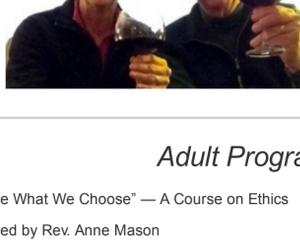
Come for an inspiring discussion whether you have read the book or not.

First Parish Picture Directory Project

Coming in January 2019! Church-wide Picture Directory project.

We're creating an online parish directory with individual and family pictures. **Starting on January 13th**, we will be collecting your best pictures during social hour to be included in the online directory. Take some good pictures over the holidays. Happy New Year and stay tuned!

~Pete Tasker



Adult Program Offering

"Since What We Choose" — A Course on Ethics

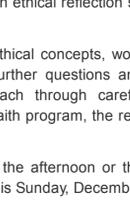
Offered by Rev. Anne Mason

Thursdays, January 17, 24, 31, and February 7

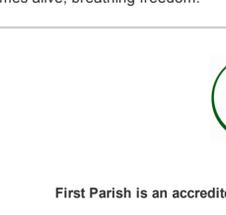
Before we need to make a choice in the midst of crisis, wouldn't it be better to take time to explore what our ethical positions are, how we arrived at them, and what decisions we make because of them? Unitarian Universalism is grounded in the understanding that our actions speak louder than our words or beliefs. Faithful living for us includes discerning the course of action that best reflects our beliefs and values and then acting or choosing accordingly. To do this we engage in ethical reflection so that we can live in a way that truly reflects our values.

In this four-week course, Rev. Anne will offer an opportunity to examine ethical concepts, work through ethical dilemmas as presented in exercises, identify areas for further questions and exploration, and perhaps more fully embrace ethical positions we reach through careful discernment. This curriculum is taken from the ten-week UUA Tapestry of Faith program, the rest of which we could offer at another time.

The course will be given on four Thursdays, January 17–Feb 7, either in the afternoon or the evening. Please sign up and indicate your preference at the Sunday this Sunday, December 2, or online at www.bit.ly/WhatWeChoose.

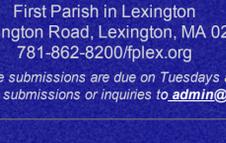


Soul Matters for December - Mystery



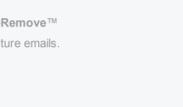
Below is an excerpt from David Steindl-Rast book, "The Mystical Core of organized Religion"

We've come to understand mysticism as the experience of communion with Ultimate Reality....The question we need to tackle is this: How does one get from mystic experience to an established religion? My one-word answer is: inevitably...One of the great surprises is that the firm of mysticism can melt even the rigor mortis of dogmatism, legalism, and ritualism. By the glance or the touch of those whose hearts are burning, doctrine, ethics, and ritual some aglow with the truth, goodness, and beauty of original fire. The dead letter comes alive, breathing freedom.



First Parish is an accredited Green Sanctuary and a Welcoming Congregation.

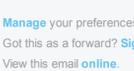
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Weekly Update submissions are due on Tuesdays at 9:00 am. Please email submissions or inquiries to admin@fplex.org.

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