

The Spire

Next issue deadline
Sunday, February 23

JANUARY 6, 2020

THE FIRST SUNDAY RECORD

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First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Arlington, 630 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, MA 02476 • Gathered 1733

Leap Forward!

The Stewardship Committee has been contemplating where we are as a vibrant faith community, and where we hope to go. The year 2020 is a leap year, with an extra day, and it seems an ideal time for our community to *Leap Forward* in grace, generosity, and commitment to the development and care of our members, and the spiritual and social-justice life force that is First Parish.

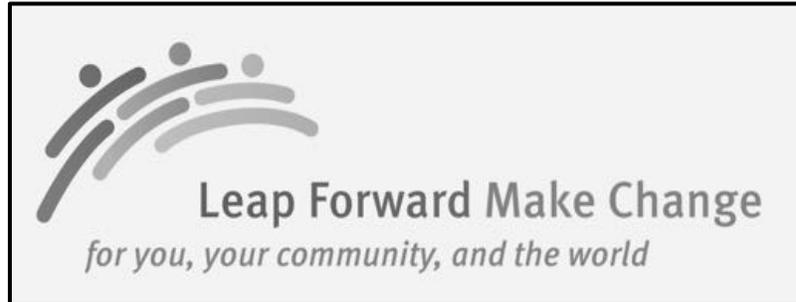
Our *Leap Forward* is already underway as we search for a second minister to enrich our community. This enrichment requires a financial investment. We have had such a positive response to the plan that 60 members have volunteered to act as Visiting Stewards. They will reach out to meet with as many of you as possible, to personally thank you for your past support, learn how First Parish is meaningful to you, and hear what might improve your experience. We will ask you to make the most generous pledge possible so that we can *Leap Forward* together, with faith, into the future.

This year's Stewardship Campaign will run from March 1 to March 15. Look for a letter in February, requesting that you pledge generously as an invested member to sustain and enhance our community.

Many of you will also get a call in early March from your Visiting Steward to arrange a time to meet. Please welcome their contact and encourage them, as they are all volunteers. The visits are not meant to interrupt your busy life, but to connect meaningfully with you about our community.

The Stewardship team is videotaping short interviews with First Parish members about what our community means to them. We'd love to hear your story! To be included, please reach out to a member of the team: Jamie Aronson, David Desjardins, Kathy Greene, Julius Pereli, Sue Sheffler, Phil Speare, and Carolyn White.

We can be reached at stewardship@firstparish.info.



A Musical Appreciation

I would like to thank the many musicians at First Parish who volunteer their talents and time to enrich our worship services and other gatherings. There are so many who contribute, including our voice and bell choirs, flute players and other instrumentalists, the UUlations, and those who serenade us at the Harvest Moon Fair. We are blessed to have such fantastic volunteers. Thank you all!

I encourage you, even if you're a little nervous, to reach out to myself, pianist Ken Seitz, or any member of the Music Committee if you'd like to contribute your musical gifts or ideas. Perhaps this could be a New Year's resolution?

— Jonathan Brennand
Director of Music



Where's Marta?

Our beloved minister, Rev. Marta Flanagan, will have surgery February 12 to remove a benign breast tumor. The expected recovery time is four weeks. In her absence, we will rely on our intern minister, Chloë Briedé. We wish Marta a swift and easy recovery.

Marta plans to be back in the pulpit on March 1 for the kickoff of this year's Stewardship Campaign. Let's support her by pledging generously when she returns!

A Wealth of Candidates

It's been a busy and productive month for the Second Minister Search Committee.

Nearly one hundred members and friends of First Parish gathered after church on January 12 for a spirited discussion of the results of our congregational survey. That's a lot of people, evidence of an active, engaged congregation – a fact not lost on the 17 candidates from around the country who applied by the January 16 deadline.

That's a lot of candidates! The committee spent hours studying resumes, watching sermons online, and checking references before winnowing the group down to six. Each of those six met with us in a 90-minute video interview. We then chose three outstanding finalists – or precandidates – each of whom has accepted an invitation from the committee to come to Arlington for a long weekend of shared meals and face-to-face interviews, culminating in a Sunday sermon at a neutral pulpit.

In early March, the committee will rank the finalists in order of preference, alert the Unitarian Universalist Association, and hope for a happy match. The Parish Committee must approve our choice before the decision is final. Assuming all goes well, we should be ready to introduce our new second minister sometime in April.

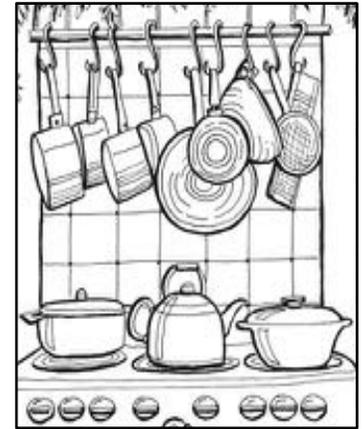
You can see the full report on the congregational survey online at <https://firstparish.info/survey/>.

As always, we welcome your feedback at secondministersearch@firstparish.info. Please feel free to speak with any of us at coffee hour.

– David Whitford, for the
Second Minister Search Committee:
John Anderson, Lois Fine,
Rev. Marta Flanagan, Carolyn Hodges (co-chair),
Marc Jacobson (co-chair), Tina Silberman

Our New and Improved Kitchen

The First Parish kitchen is among our greatest resources, providing tools to help us not only cook but to build relationships and foster community. As in our home kitchens, people tend to gather in this space. But how often have you been unable to find what you need in all those drawers and cabinets?



A kitchen with many chefs is harder to organize than most. Our recent January refresh led to much success in making the kitchen more user-friendly.

The improvements:

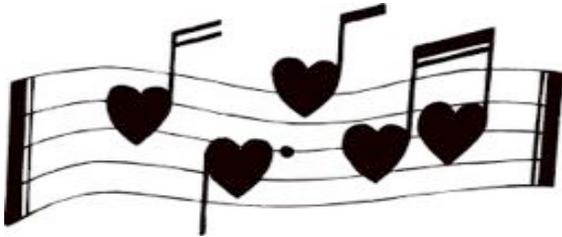
- We cleared floor clutter to ensure that the 2019 redesign continues to accommodate accessibility.
- We reorganized cabinets to reduce single-use dishware and help eliminate piles of unwashed dishes. Compostable cups, plates, and bowls are now in clearly marked cabinets.
- Spices and other cooking supplies are now stored together in labeled cabinets.
- We reorganized cookware on racks so everything is visible. To reach items on high, please *carefully* use the stepladder stored between the freezer and the refrigerators. Safety first!
- We organized dishware, flatware, and serving pieces in the Vestry, where their storage cabinets are clearly marked.
- Coffee-hour supplies, including dishware and tablecloths, are now in one cabinet in the Vestry.
- We removed items that were broken, chipped, or otherwise unusable to increase working space.
- Personal items left in the kitchen and Vestry are in the Lost and Found. Please take a look – you may find something you have been missing.

We have a request: After you use an item, please return it to its home, which may be different from what you remember before the reorganization. This simple step will help ensure that everyone who uses the kitchen can find what they need.

– The Kitchen Crew

Celebrate and Sing!

Rev. Marta Flanagan and Charlie Duffy have been a part of one another's lives for four years and have decided to make it official. They will be married on Saturday, June 13.



Marta is obviously Unitarian Universalist, and Charlie is Roman Catholic. They have chosen to marry at Harvard Memorial Church in Harvard Yard, as it is common ground for two Harvard grads. Rev. Tricia Brenna will officiate. Tricia served as our acting co-minister some years ago, and Marta and Charlie and many at First Parish hold her in high regard.

The ceremony will be at 3 pm, with a toast to follow. As Harvard Memorial Church is small, the toast will be at First Parish in Cambridge, a short walk through Harvard Yard. Everyone from First Parish is invited. Invitations by e-mail will arrive in the months ahead.

Of special note is that Marta and Charlie have commissioned our Music Director Emeritus, Kenneth Seitz, to compose a piece for the occasion. Singers are welcome to join a special wedding choir. Just let Marta know at marta@firstparish.info.

A Fond Farewell to Joan

Joan Dyer, who has worked devotedly as our Office Administrator for ten years, is ready to join her husband, Wayne, in the joy of retirement. She plans to leave us before the end of our program year in June.

Joan has been an integral part of the staff team at First Parish, and it will be very hard to say goodbye. In her years with us she has brought on additional staff and managed operations through capital renovations. Most of all, Joan's savvy has gotten us through many a pickle!

The Human Resources Committee is posting the position; note that our personnel policy precludes hiring a member of First Parish.

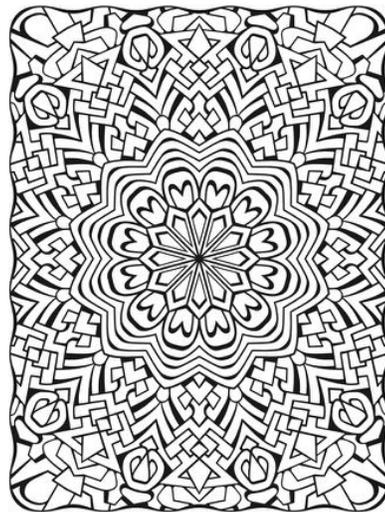
ParSnips

Passages and Renewal

The year began with the death of longtime church member Bea Shriver. Her memorial service on January 19 was well attended, and included appreciation of her life and her 22 years of participating in the First Parish community, particularly in the Harvest Moon Fair and the Women's Alliance.

The Second Minister Search Committee is making great progress in narrowing down an application pool of 16 ministers. This healthy response bodes well for the quality of the final selection, planned for April.

Another search is underway to find a successor to Office Administrator Joan Dyer, who is retiring. We have received nearly 60 applicants for this position, another indication that First Parish is a place where people want to be!



In other news, we were able to repair the church roof and pay off the full cost from our capital infrastructure fund. This fund was developed several years ago to handle just this kind of vital maintenance of our buildings and grounds.

Our Stewardship Campaign begins in March. To facilitate this year's effort to arrange one-to-one visits with as many members of the congregation as possible, the Stewardship Committee is bringing in a consultant to train those who have volunteered for this effort. The training will be the weekend of February 8, and the Parish Committee (ParCom) plans to participate.

Yet another passage and renewal comes to ParCom as our leadership undergoes a planned rotation. Steve McMullin steps down as chair, but will remain on the committee. Marie Meteer becomes chair, and Sara Galantowicz is now vice-chair.

Many thanks to Steve for years of fine leadership!

— Celia Wcislo, Clerk



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The Spire

Diane Shriver, Editor

Next issue: Sunday, March 1
Submissions due by Sunday, February 23
Items may be edited for space and clarity.

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If you do not have e-mail, contact the office.

The Spire generally deals with the big picture.
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by Wednesday at noon.

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