

Next issue deadline  
Sunday, March 28

# The Spire

MARCH 7, 2021

THE FIRST SUNDAY RECORD

VOL. 63, No. 7

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

## Taking Care of Our Community

Inspired by the way First Parish has pulled together in a year of challenges, this year's Stewardship theme is "Together, Stronger Still." It reflects the collective resilience we have shown in the face of the pandemic, racial violence, and fears of a democracy in decline.

Our campaign is off to a great start! By *The Spire* deadline we had already received pledges of \$310,825, which is 44 percent of our goal of \$705,000. Those pledges represent the generosity of 21 percent of our member households.

We have stood strong, stood at the curb holding signs calling for justice, stood for one another, and stood in faith as a community. Among our many strengths are:

- Attending on-line services and a wealth of spiritual and personal development offerings in greater numbers than we attended in-person offerings last year.
- Ministering well to those facing challenges.
- Providing our Youth Group with a safe space to demonstrate their resilience and creativity.
- Learning about the needs of our families who have younger children.

As we all know, it is the responsibility and joy of every one of us to keep First Parish vibrant. Each year we dig deep to make pledges that sustain and enhance our community. Our pledges allow us to continue the good work we do for each other, our neighbors, and in the larger world.

By now everyone should have received a letter requesting a generous pledge. Many will also get a call from a Visiting Steward, who will arrange to meet, probably via Zoom. Please welcome the call and meet with your Visiting Steward. Most people find these meetings to be a meaningful, pleasant opportunity to reflect together on our First Parish experience and the importance of sharing financially in the sustenance of our community.

## How many ministers have served First Parish?



*Rev. Robert Walker Skating on Duddingston Loch,  
painted by Henry Raeburn in the 1790s*

*(answer on page 3)*

Our goal is to gain pledges from 100 percent of our members. All gifts, large and small, are welcome, and indeed crucial to the continuing health of First Parish.

Additional information about our Stewardship Campaign can be found on the church website, at [firstparish.info/give](http://firstparish.info/give).

— The Stewardship Committee:  
Jamie Aronson, David Desjardins,  
Rev. Erica Richmond, Sue Sheffler,  
Phil Speare, Heidi Swarts

## Making Music Together

The First Parish Music Committee offers programs to keep us strong and connected. Please join us for one or all of these events, via Zoom.

☆ **Music Sunday**      March 14, 10 am

Our service will include music from Brian and Rosi Amador, co-founders of Sol y Canto.

☆ **First Parish Talent Show**  
Thursday, March 18, 7 to 8 pm

Our second annual Music Talent Show features both youth and adult performers. Your free-will donation benefits Arlington Eats. Please visit the Events section at [www.firstparish.info](http://www.firstparish.info) for details about participating. E-mail [music@firstparish.info](mailto:music@firstparish.info) for the link.

☆ **Celtic Melodies with Diane Taraz**  
Saturday, March 20, 7:30 to 9 pm

Diane continues her series of concerts with an evening of Irish and Scottish songs guaranteed to lift spirits. Contact her for the link, at [diane@dianetaraz.com](mailto:diane@dianetaraz.com).

— Robin Baker, Chair  
Music Committee

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## Finding Facts

The internet is packed with information, but how do you know which bits are true? Believing bad information can have serious consequences. How can you protect yourself and others from falsehoods?



On Wednesday, March 10, join Rachael Stark to explore these issues, from 7 to 8 pm. In her workshop we will learn about some usually reliable sources of information, sources that are often questionable or deceptive, and how to tell the difference. Rachael is a college librarian, researcher, writer, curriculum designer, activist, and longtime First Parish member.

Come with questions. Come with especially great or terrible sources you have found. Come with sources you are not sure whether you should believe or not.

Visit [www.firstparish.info](http://www.firstparish.info) to receive the Zoom link, under Events.

## Pinwheels A-Whirling!

Looking forward to Easter with a message of hope, we plan to fill the First Parish lawn with colorful wind spinners. We will write our hopes on them, and they will brighten our corner from April 1 to 8.



First Parish will order pinwheels that may need some basic assembly. You may choose to assemble one, write your hope on it, and place your pinwheel yourself, or you may ask First Parish to do all that for you.

We are also collecting photos of individuals with their pinwheels to be made into a video compilation for the Easter service. If you choose to assemble pinwheel(s) yourself, you have the option of sending in a photo for our video compilation! Instructions for submitting your photo will be e-mailed to you if you opt to share.

There is a form on our church website at [www.firstparish.info](http://www.firstparish.info) to handle this joyful process.

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## Preparedness Planning

On Friday, March 12, at 7:30 pm, the Alliance invites you to join a multi-perspective discussion of how to plan for and through life's transitions. Visit [alliance@firstparish.info](mailto:alliance@firstparish.info) to receive the Zoom link.

“Time Travel to the Future: Preparedness Planning Throughout Life” is co-sponsored by the Alliance and the STAR adult-education group. It will feature a panel discussion with Rev. Erica Richmond and First Parish members Kathy Kemp and Alice Austin on being prepared, and small-group reflections on how to gather and communicate vital information.

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## Hot Cross Buns!

Join Carolyn Hodges and her Youth Baking Squad to make a seasonal favorite, via Zoom, on Tuesday, March 16 from 7 to 8:30 pm. Bake along to a proven recipe, or just watch the fun.

Because there is a stage of rising the dough, please contact Carolyn at [RSVP@firstparish.info](mailto:RSVP@firstparish.info) to get the recipe in advance. The link is at [www.firstparish.info](http://www.firstparish.info), under Events.



# ParSnips

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## Perseverance

At our February meeting the Parish Committee decided that we will not resume worship in the Sanctuary until it is safe for all to attend. This means waiting until the state has raised the limits on indoor gatherings to levels that accommodate our whole congregation, until vaccines are widely available, and until the spread of Covid-19 is very low. We are considering September Ingathering as a possible date of return.

Services will continue on Zoom, and this year's summer services will also be on Zoom. We are exploring technology investments to allow us to continue offering Zoom access to services even after we return to in-person worship.

At the February 28 service we kicked off our Stewardship Campaign with the theme "Together, Stronger Still," a reflection of how we have weathered the pandemic and even thrived as a community. Visiting Stewards will be reaching out to many members for their feedback and to discuss pledging. Please welcome their call! The Stewardship Committee is offering some terrific facemasks with our theme and logo; contact the church office if you would like one.

The Parish Committee continues to feel blessed by the hard work and commitment of our ministers, staff, and the many volunteers who keep our train running. Thank you for all you do!

– Celia Wcislo, Clerk

## Reflections

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### Going Places

As a performer I used to enjoy traveling about, and found it a pleasant challenge to work in unfamiliar spaces. My favorite places are old buildings with the glorious acoustics of wood walls and plaster ceilings – vintage libraries, historic houses, venerable museums.

One place in particular, 130-year-old Dewey Hall in Sheffield, is completely clad in old wood, creating delightful acoustics. Its low stage, about two feet high, has tin-lined holes along the curved front where the original footlights once held glowing flames.

I've sung on that little stage in a Colonial gown, a Civil War hoopskirt, and other antique clothing, just basking in the perfect setting and the vibrant sound. I am grateful the footlights are no longer aflame, given the hazards of flowing dresses.

Over the years generous folks have put me up for gigs. One of the most memorable is the woman who hosted me for a festival in Connecticut. She e-mailed that she would be staying late at the event, but I could come to her house after my performance, if I liked, and she would leave the door open.

"Don't mind the pit bull," she added. "He's a sweetheart."

Armed only with this advice, I pulled up in the darkness and prepared to face either the jaws of death

or slobbery kisses. The resident pittie barely glanced at me, and we went to sleep without interaction.

Currently anchored safely at home, my Zoom performances keep me sane. I hope that you, too, can enjoy adapting to unexpected conditions!

– Diane Taraz Shriver, *Spire* Editor

We have had 31 lead ministers, two assistant ministers, one associate minister, and three interim ministers. The first one, hired in 1739, served for 44 years, and our most recent arrived just this year. Among the ministerial portraits along the back wall in the balcony are a few who served the Universalist church up the street, with whom we merged in 1965.

Some had unlikely names. To maintain his dignity, Rev. William Parrot (with us from 1878 to 1881) pronounced his name *à la Française*: "Pah-row" – just as British TV's Hyacinth Bucket insisted her name was "Bou-quet."

Rev. Augustus Mendon Lord (1890s) often referred to himself as "The Lord," with a twinkle in his eye. Before he spoke he would sometimes intone, "Thus saith the Lord," which either amused people or made them want to hit him with a collection box (probably a bit of both).



# Staff and Contact Information

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## The Spire

Diane Shriver, Editor

Next issue: Sunday, April 4  
Submissions due by Sunday, March 28  
*Items may be edited for space and clarity.*

E-mail to *spire@firstparish.info*.  
If you do not have e-mail, contact the office.

*The Spire* generally deals with the big picture.  
Time-sensitive details belong in the Weekly E-mail  
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by Wednesday at noon.

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