

# TOP OF THE SQUARE JANUARY, 2018 NEWSLETTER

First Parish Plymouth Unitarian Universalist

National Memorial Pilgrim Church

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HOLIDAY WISHES TO ALL  
FROM FIRST PARISH IN PLYMOUTH



**Director of  
Religious Education**  
Kim Caple

**Director of Music**  
Sandi Hammond

**Director of Music  
Emerita**  
Lynne Wilkinson



**Parish Committee:  
President**  
Anne-Marie Harnett

**Vice President**  
Ron Clarke

**Treasurer**  
Tammy Marshall-  
Hewlitt

**Clerk**  
Amy Palmer

**Members at Large**  
Patricia Devine  
Meghan Snee

## CONGREGATIONAL MEETING AND VOTE SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2017

Dear First Parish,

We had a Special Congregational Meeting this past Sunday December 17th after our church service. We voted on the terms of the Charitable Trust that will be established with GSMD (General Society of Mayflower Descendants). The Trust will hold the deed to the Meetinghouse while GSMD meets the requirement of raising three million by 2020. When they reach this goal, we will transfer the deed of ownership to them. The vote was 32 yes and 0 no in favor of the terms of the Charitable Trust as outlined by Deborah Rudolf and Ron Clarke.

Thank you to everyone who attended and voted. And thank you to all who have put much time and energy into this historic document.

In gratitude,  
Anne-Marie Harnett  
President  
First Parish Plymouth

## **What is the Deal with the Theme of the Month for Worship?**



***You may have heard from the Pulpit or viewed on our web site:  
"This month we are exploring, what does it mean to be a Community of ....."***

*Since September, every month our congregation focuses on one word. This is called Theme-Based Worship. The following is how the Worship and Music Committee's decision for Themed-Based Worship all came about.*

*Last year, under the leadership of Rev. Ed Hardy, we discussed the value of having all of us (singles, seniors, parents, and children) engaging in the same conversation. To learn more detail on the benefits to a congregation for Themed-Based Worship, please refer to the wonderful article written by our own Patricia Devine further down in this newsletter.*

*Our immediate hope was that Theme-Based Worship could bind us closer as a community. For each month, we could all explore the same values and themes through religious education, readings, music, skits and sermons. If we had a Small Group Ministry, those circle groups would also be deep in the same conversation.*

*Rev. Ed generously provided the funds from his discretionary account so that we could join a themed-based worship program through an organization called SOUL MATTERS. Each month, SOUL MATTERS sends us sermons, skits, readings, music, stories and engaging questions based on a single theme. All of these materials were written by UU ministers and UU staff members. A membership in SOUL MATTERS also grants us access to a network of other UU churches engaged in the theme. Currently, we also have access to their entire library of materials. The timing for joining SOUL MATTERS, couldn't have been more perfect as now our lay leadership has fabulous resources on hand.*

*As we go through the church year your Worship and Music Committee welcomes your feedback, thoughts and suggestions regarding Theme-Based Worship.*

*-Linda Harding, Chair of Worship and Music Committee*

## **New Year's Resolutions ... Don't Be Too Hard On Yourself ...**

Take a walk every day. Or at least briefly consider it.

Forget past mistakes and press on to greater ones.

Remember ... New Year's Resolutions are for people who don't have the willpower to stay the same.



# Religious Education

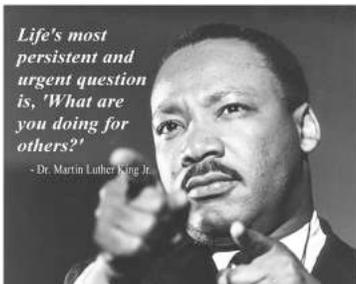
## COMING UP IN JANUARY IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Sunday, January 7

Intergenerational Service featuring Jim Scott, Composer and Musical Activist



All are welcome to join the congregation in the Meetinghouse for this special service featuring Jim Scott. For more than three decades, Jim has made it his business to create and perform music that celebrates the earth. His songs and poetry have inspired and educated audiences around the world. He has developed presentations for every age group and crafted songs that sensitize his listeners to the beauty of the earth, teaching principles of ecology in memorable verses.

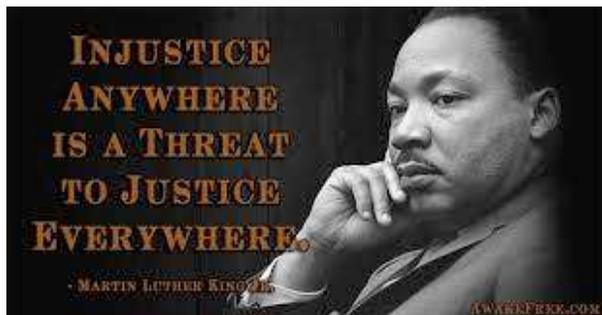


### Sunday, January 14 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service with the Church of the Pilgrimage

During the Worship Service, our Religious Education program will join the Religious Education program from the Church of the Pilgrimage and prepare a meal for the homeless.

**FRIDAY NIGHT FELLOWSHIP** – Stay tuned for more information on January’s Friday Night Fellowship

## Martin Luther King, Jr Rally “Shout Out for Justice”



A rally will be held on Monday, January 15<sup>th</sup> at the Spire Center on Main Street. Organized by the Plymouth Area Interfaith Clergy Association and Plymouth No Place for Hate, this rally will feature an orator who will deliver King’s “*I Have a Dream*” speech, and Reverend Ed Hardy will be speaking to the dream today.

Music will be provided by choirs from Brockton’s Messiah Baptist Church. We have planned this to be for all ages, with a service project of packing snack packs for the Hedge School after school program taking place. The day begins at 9:15, with the Rally at 10. A worship service will be held at Bethel AME Church (walking distance) at 11 am. It is wonderful when the community comes together like this and we do hope you will join us!!

## Why First Parish is committed to Theme-Based Worship

Theme-based worship, or theme-based ministry, is defined as the selection and application of a theme that provides the structural message to the Sunday worship service (via the readings, the sermon and the music selection), to Religious Education lessons and activities, and to our community activities and fund-raising events. An important purpose of the theme-based approach is to create on-going multigenerational connections, as people of all ages explore common themes in age-appropriate ways. Given that we strive for our worship to be a continuing conversation, from Sunday to Sunday and year to year, it is useful to have a thread or theme that links and weaves each service together.

There are numerous advantages of theme-based worship to our congregation. First, the themes **unify and strengthen our community** by connecting all aspects of programming which in turn creates a consistent experience for the entire congregation going on a spiritual journey together. The themes weave a central thread throughout all church programs and establish a common language and common symbols. Also, the themes give focus to our music and arts programs.

Second, themes **offer depth**. When adults and RE share the same worship service theme, suddenly RE isn't just "another program;" instead all program components become a way to explore the worship theme at a deeper level by offering a deeper worship experience via a consistent message throughout the service.

Another advantage is that the themes encourage us to **take our theology seriously**. Using themes reminds us that we are not a cafeteria religion offering random experiences, but instead a rich tradition that promotes distinctive values. Themes help us build a cohesive theological understanding and embrace a practical theology we can use in everyday life. Theme-based worship also **fosters collaboration**. When all staff and lay leaders are working on the same theme, this allows all of us to share ideas and support each other at a whole new level.

Finally, theme-based worship **builds the architecture of our associational interdependence**. Themes allow congregations throughout the country to follow the same ideas and topics and break out of our congregational silos. When different congregations follow the same themes, staff and lay leaders can more easily reach out, share ideas and collaborate. Given the ever-widening group of Unitarian Universalist congregations using theme-based ministries, there are numerous resources available to us for structuring a theme-based approach. For example, the *Soul Matters Sharing Circle* (which is made up of numerous UU congregations that follow the same monthly themes) shares small group packets, sermons, worship ideas and children's religious education curriculum around that monthly theme. Members of the circle also have access to six years' worth of archived material.

*First Parish introduced a theme-based worship approach in September 2017. The themes we have employed thus far include:*

- ***September - Covenant:*** *Covenant holds a whole vision for how to live in this complicated, beautiful and broken world. It says we are most human when we bind ourselves in relationships of trust, mutual accountability and continual return.*
- ***October – Healing:*** *To be a community of healing requires dedication and a willingness to fix what's been broken, to listen away each other's' pain, to ask forgiveness when we are not the good guys and gals we so want to be.*
- ***November – Story:*** *Our lives are not just made up of stories; they are also made by stories. Simply put, stories write us as much as we write them.*
- ***December - Presence:*** *The underlying message is that the world is full of unnoticed gifts and grace. The greatest gift of the holidays is noticing the many treasures that have been sitting there all along.*

*Our proposed themes for the future include: January- Prophecy; February - Identity; March- Risk; April - Transformation; May - Embodiment; and June - JOY. We look forward to continuing and growing our Theme-based Worship in collaboration with the whole First Parish community.*

# JANUARY WORSHIP

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A COMMUNITY OF PROPHECY?

**Beginning on Sunday, January 14, Morning Worship Services in January and February will be held in Brewster Chapel.**

**Sunday, January 7**

**“Let This Be a House of Peace”  
Musical Service led by Singer/Songwriter Jim Scott**



In songs, choral music, instrumental soundtracks for several documentaries and the PBS series “Body and Soul”, Jim continues to make music with a depth of artistry and craft that separates his music from that of many other singer songwriters.

As Co-Chair of the Unitarian Universalist Seventh Principle Project, Jim Scott helped to create the “Green Sanctuary” program and accompanying handbook for building an ecological/spiritual awareness in church congregations. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UAvai4ukcYI>)

**Sunday, January 14**

**(Martin Luther King Weekend) - "The Beatitudes" Chapel  
Lay led by Vaughn Keller**

Of all of the Jesus stories, *The Sermon on The Mount* is considered by contemporary progressive Christian Scholars to be the essence of the Christian message. When MLK was accused of being an extremist, he quoted *The Sermon on the Mount*.

**Sunday, January 20**

**“Micah 6:8” – lay led by Linda Harding Chapel**

One of the most popular verses among both Jews and Christians promoting social justice is [Micah 6:8](#). What does it mean to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly?

**Friday, January 26**

**Friday Night Service**

Stay tuned for more information on this month’s Friday Night Fellowship

**Sunday, January 28**

**“What Does It Mean To Be A Prophetic Church?” Chapel  
Led by Rev. David Kohlmeier**



Rev. David Miller Kohlmeier is the standing minister at the UU fellowship of Falmouth. Rev. David has a BA in English Literature with Minors in Philosophy and Creative Writing from West Virginia State University (where he graduated summa cum laude). While an undergrad he was an Americorps-VISTA volunteer, working with veterans making the difficult transition from combat to college classroom. He also worked on veteran’s mental health literacy and nutrition programs for poor populations.

Rev. David lives in Falmouth with his husband Nathan (a Postulant for Holy Orders in the Episcopal Church), their daughter Ramona Joy, their Old English Sheepdog Baily, and their cat Capote.

# JANUARY CALENDAR

## MEN'S BREAKFAST

Saturday, January 6 & 20, 9:00 am  
T-Bones, Plymouth Center

## CHOIR PRACTICE

Sunday, January 7, 14, 21 & 28  
8:45 am, Meetinghouse

## PARISH COMMITTEE

Monday, January 8, 7:00 pm, Parish House

## FRIENDS OF FIRST PARISH

Wednesday, January 10, 9:30 am, Parish House

## LGBTQA+ OPEN MIC NIGHT

Friday, January 12, 7:00 pm, Kendall Hall

## WORSHIP & MUSIC COMMITTEE

Wednesday, January 17, 7:30 pm, Parish House

## FRIDAY NIGHT FELLOWSHIP

Friday, January 26, 6:30 pm, Kendall Hall  
**All Are Welcome!**

## WOMEN'S BREAKFAST

Saturday, January 27, 9:00 am  
I-HOP, Exit 5, Plymouth

# COFFEE HOUR HOSTS JANUARY



## January 7

Shelby & Aaron Smith, Jan Palmer-Tarbox

## January 14

Rick McDonald, Valerie Peck Meghan Snee

## January 21

Jen and Brett Creane, Ken Stone

## January 28

Linda Harding, Shelley-Jo Talvacchia,  
Dianne Zolla

**THANK YOU!**



We meet for rehearsals on Sunday mornings at 8:45 in the Sanctuary.

**All are welcome to join us.**



## BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND SKILLS

If any of you would like a mini voice lesson with me to assess range, pitch matching, sight-reading, or any other kind of feedback to help build your confidence and skills, just let me know, and we can schedule something.

# FATE OF THE CHURCH NEWSLETTER?

At the January Parish Committee Meeting, we will be having a discussion on whether or not to continue the monthly Newsletter. If we eliminate the monthly newsletter, we will be relying solely on the weekly eblasts, and a hard copy of the eblast can be mailed to anyone without a computer or to anyone who wishes to receive it. It will be mailed at noon and received on Saturday.

Your comments and suggestions are important to us, so if you have any input or suggestions, please email them to the church office at [office@firstparishplymouthuu.org](mailto:office@firstparishplymouthuu.org) or to Anne-Marie Harnett at [amh36@hotmail.com](mailto:amh36@hotmail.com).

## UU's BEING UU's

### ANOTHER LOAD OF SUPPLIES HEADED FOR HEAD START



The quick and overwhelming response to requests from Head Start is very much appreciated. When they picked up the last load, the representative said that whatever their greatest need is, they can always count on us and they are so grateful.

**Thank you all you wonderful, generous First Parish people!**



A quick Shout Out! to Rick McDonald for his tireless work on our new website. Not only did he conquer a significant learning curve, but continues to update this, a never-ending chore. Thank you Rick for taking on this huge task and for all the things you do to make First Parish better!



The faucet in the basement sink was leaking, and we called Wayne Pereira to come fix it. It wasn't an easy fix, and it took two trips to the supply store to get the proper parts and another two hours to complete the job. The parts came to \$247, and the labor was \$200, which he donated to us. Not only did he donate his labor, but the parts as well saving us \$447.00. He has done several repairs for us at no cost, however, this was exceedingly generous.

We aren't sure if Wayne is a UU, but if anyone needs a plumber, please give this capable and generous plumber a call at 508-774-2543.

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Live Pageant Sunday, December 10, 2017





Adapted from the Unitarian Universalist Church in Cambridge, this no rehearsal, intergenerational, interactive pageant tells the traditional story of Christmas. All in attendance were encouraged and welcomed to participate in whatever role called to them as the narrators cast the pageant in live time culminating in a full manger scene. Once again this year, we had the participation of Bakka the dog as a lamb, a fitting role for this gentle creature. **Thank you all!**

*First Parish Plymouth  
19 Town Square  
Plymouth, MA 02360*



*No winter lasts forever;  
No spring skips its turn.  
-Hal Borland*

*First Parish in Plymouth  
“Love is the spirit of this congregation  
and service its law.”*

*Welcome to First Parish Unitarian Universalist  
1606 - 2017*