



Stone Temple News

February 2021

Minister's Message

By Rev. Rebecca Froom

Late winter can be a tired time of the year. The festivities of the winter holidays are behind us and the full flowering of spring is still two or so months ahead of us. Yes, there is now more light to greet us in the evening than just a few weeks ago, but we are still in the cold depths of winter. And of course, we are approaching the year-mark of living in semi-quarantine as we observe the public health restrictions that are so necessary for the public good. It is okay to feel tired during this season! One of the challenges before us within our tiredness is to find spaces in which to rest without completely withdrawing from the connections and commitments that are near and dear to our hearts.

Our winter themes at United First Parish Church have been: Imagination (January), Beloved Community (February), and Commitment (March). Taken together this season invites us to use our imagination to envision beloved community and then commit to bringing that beloved community into being. We are invited into this work at a time when the pandemic is still claiming thousands of lives each day and when thousands of people are being vaccinated each day. We are given the strange opportunity to create beloved community to the best of our ability within this pandemic reality AND to commit to building beloved community once we are able to come together again in person. While continuing to work towards beloved community in the midst of pandemic fatigue is in many ways exhausting, thinking about nourishing beloved community when it is safe to gather again can be exciting and energizing. This is the dance of late winter – a dance of grey days and bright evenings, of weary spirits and a rising hope.

Here at United First Parish Church, we have made the decision to continue to hold our Sunday morning services online through the end of our “church year” in late June. We are cautiously and enthusiastically hopeful that we can return to our sanctuary for Sunday worship in September. At this point it is clear there will be no one moment that brings a definitive “end” to the pandemic. Consequently, throughout the spring and summer we will likely find new and familiar ways to begin to safely gather outside or in small groups. Much like seasons of nature we cannot accurately predict when and how we will open up, but we know that a blossoming of our community is forthcoming.

While we are still in this winter season of the spirit, I encourage you to stay engaged at UFPC in the ways that feel most accessible, authentic, and meaningful to YOU! Many of us spend a lot of time on Zoom for school, work, and our social lives, and by weekends some of us are feeling a great deal of Zoom fatigue. On Sunday morning it is okay to turn your camera off for some (or all) of the service and stretch out or walk around as you listen to the service. Remember you can also watch past services and children’s chapel services on our YouTube channel “United First Parish Church Unitarian Universalist.” Links are found on our website at <https://ufpc.org/weekly-services> and <https://ufpc.org/religious-education>. This year I have started using a calendaring tool to make it easier for folks to schedule appointments with me for pastoral care, spiritual reflection, and to collaborate on church programming. You can schedule an appointment with me at <https://calendly.com/rev-rebecca-froom> or you can continue to contact me by email, text, and phone.

One of the meanings at the root of the word religion is to “tie together” and another meaning is to “reread.” In short, the purpose of religion is to build beloved community within which we can make meaning out of our life. There is so much going on in the world now that we yearn to make sense of in our hearts and minds. Even as we

continue to keep a loving distance from one another, remember that we are one another's spiritual companions, here to help one another rest when we are tired and here to help one another reach towards the summer sun as spring slowly approaches.

In peace and joy,
Rev. Rebecca

REflections

By Joan McDonald, DRE

The last 12 months have been a whirlwind of changes for all of us. Families with children and youth have had to balance continued adjustments to work, childcare or school schedules and outside activities. You may have missed gatherings celebrating life events within your families, as well as, sharing your grief from family and community losses. Religious education may not be a priority for your family at this time, but I want to let you know that I am here to help in any way I can.

Some of you may be watching the children's chapels I have been videotaping since September. This offering is one that gives families the flexibility to view whenever it is convenient for you. These chapels are directed to younger children in the preschool to early elementary age. As I gained confidence in developing the chapel, I have added more music and sometimes share a story that is told by someone else (via YouTube). I also offer questions that might start a conversation at home and sometimes an activity or coloring page. My hope is to develop more activities that dovetail with the chapel services and try to hold some real time activities via Zoom. Programming for older children and youth has been on hiatus—but I hope that we can create some activities that this age group would want to engage in.

Some ideas under consideration are:

- creating a bedtime story hour
- holding a live zoom children's chapel
- zoom games hour
- watch party (for a movie)
- family activities for the month's theme
- social justice activities like Standout for Black Lives
- Monthly Popcorn Theology—using media to explore topics for youth
- UFPC Pen Pals—sending and receiving letters/cards

Over the next few months, Rev. Rebecca and I will be scheduling one-on-one conversations with parents and older youth to help us understand your needs, what direction RE programming should take, how we can better support you and your families and plan for our return to in person worship and educational programming. We will be reaching out individually to families to schedule a best time to talk via phone or Zoom.

Resources for all ages

Combining January and February Soul Matters themes of Imagination and Beloved Community I wanted to share some resources I found.

Perhaps allowing your imagination to take over helps relieve the stress and often the depression that winter often brings with less sunlight. A few weeks ago, someone shared the website The Children's Diversity and Justice Library, which selected books for young children to teens and a few for parents on the topic of: Engaging Imagination: Books for January 2021: <https://cdjlibrary.org/news/2021/1/4/engaging-imagination-books-for-january-2021>. If you have a chance, take a look at the selections for all ages. One of my favorite picture books in this collection is *The Paper Kingdom* by Helena Ku Rhee and Pascal Campion and you can watch a young girl, Jaewon Nicky Hyun, read the story on YouTube here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_SJTba8yHI.

If you liked the story, we shared in worship a few weeks ago, *Beautiful OOPS!* by Barney Saltzberg, my favorite reading of it is found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wbj3HuxojM>—the readers are two young children Tzy and Achilla.

And for the February theme of Beloved Community: Books for February 2021, the CDJ Library has posted its selection of books that focus on the beloved community Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. imagined as a society based on justice, equity, peace and love of others: <https://cdjlibrary.org/news/2021/2/2/beloved-community-books-for-february-2021>.

One suggestion for youth is the book *Woke: A Young Poet's Call to Justice* by Mahogany L. Browne, Elizabeth Acevedo, Olivia Gatwood and Theodore Taylor III. Mahogany L. Browne reads excerpts from the book here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olhMOLVy9Hc>.

For younger children the picture book, *Freedom on the Menu: The Greensboro Sit-Ins* by Carole Boston Weatherford: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2587RFVAeLg>, tells the story of the 1960 civil rights sit-ins at the Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina, as seen through the eyes of a young Southern black girl.

Recently I found the YouTube channel *Sankofa Read Aloud*: www.youtube.com/c/SankofaReadAloud/videos. The creator describes her purpose "as an educator and a mother in my community, I believe that it is vital that African American children are able to see themselves within the beautiful stories that they read. At Sankofa Read Aloud your child will encounter a variety of short stories written for them by amazing authors. It is my mission to be a resource for teachers and parents in the online learning community as well as the classroom."

For adult reads there are several suggestions: *Waking Up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race* by Debby Irving and *Towards Collective Liberation: Anti-Racist Organizing, Feminist Praxis, and Movement Building Strategy* by Chris Crass.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Quincy for Black Lives Standout

Thursdays, 2:00–4:00 pm, church front steps

I am privileged to announce that UFPC is partnering with Quincy for Transformative Change for a new initiative in support of Black Lives Matter. We will meet on the church front steps weekly to bear peaceful witness and to advocate for justice and equity for our fellow citizens of color. You are invited to join our small but dedicated group. Kindly direct your questions to me at my cell 617-272-0274 or artclaire@comcast.net. Thank you, Claire Fitzmaurice.

Weekly Children's Chapel

Each Thursday/Friday, Joan McDonald, our Director of Religious Education, posts a new children's chapel video for our preschool to early elementary age children. The video will be posted on the Religious Education page on our website: <https://ufpc.org/religious-education>. The theme focus for this month is Beloved Community.

Book Group

Thursday, February 4, 7:00 pm on Zoom

The UFPC Book Group meets on the first Thursday of every month from 7:00 to 8:30 pm, with a gap in summer and in December. All members and friends of UFPC are welcome to join us. We will meet on Zoom during the pandemic. We try to select a balance of styles, and this year we ended up with 4 non-fiction works and 5 works

of fiction. You are welcome to come if you have not quite finished the book. Over the years we have had some practice at avoiding spoilers and it is always fun to have new voices.

Our February book selection is *The Overstory* by Richard Powers, winner of the 2019 Pulitzer Prize in Fiction, is a sweeping, impassioned work of activism and resistance that is also a stunning evocation of—and paean to—the natural world. From the roots to the crown and back to the seeds, Richard Powers' twelfth novel unfolds in concentric rings of interlocking fables that range from antebellum New York to the late twentieth-century Timber Wars of the Pacific Northwest and beyond. There is a world alongside ours—vast, slow, interconnected, resourceful, magnificently inventive, and almost invisible to us. This is the story of a handful of people who learn how to see that world and who are drawn up into its unfolding catastrophe.

Join by computer: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86564868177>

Join by telephone: 1-646-558-8656, Meeting ID: 865 6486 8177

Writing Group

Sunday, February 7, 12:00 pm on Zoom

Our UFPC Writing Group meets the first Sunday of the month at noon. We will use Zoom links to gather online during the pandemic. As in the past, we welcome everyone to join us in a free writing session and optional sharing of our words that pursue thinking on a theme. This is a non-critiqued, open minded, generous group that encourages self-expression in a supportive gathering. You can attend one or more sessions. No advance reservation is required. Groups tend to vary in size between 6 and 14 participants, and the session lasts for 45 minutes to an hour. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact facilitator Jim Petosa at jimjamespeto@aol.com or at 301-442-3781.

Join by computer: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86170075449>

Join by telephone: 1-646-558-8656, Meeting ID: 861 7007 5449

Antiracism Book Group

The Antiracism Book Group will be on hiatus in February. A new book to read and reflect on will be chosen and the group will meet via Zoom on Thursday, March 11 and 25 from 6:30-7:30 pm. The following are some of the books under consideration: UUA's Common read for 2021 *Breathe: A Letter to My Sons* by Imani Perry; *How to be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi; *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* by Isabel Wilkerson; *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* by Ibram X. Kendi. For more information, please contact Joan McDonald at dreufpc@gmail.com.

Save the Date

The Great UFPC Sweet and Savory Auction and Variety Show!

Hosted by Jim Petosa and Rev. Rebecca Froom

Saturday, March 20, 6:30–8:30 pm on Zoom

The first day of spring – the vernal equinox comes with:

- Bid on Savory dishes and Sweet desserts!
- Bid on a variety of Silent Auction items – coming online by March 1!
- Participate in the Spring Fling hat or head dress contest!
- Purchase tickets for the 50/50 raffle!
- Sing, dance, tell stories, poetry, play an instrument in the variety show!
- Buy a ticket for \$5.00 and get a zoom link to attend the festivities!

Questions:

- Have an item for the Silent Auction? Contact Brenda Reed.
- Want to cook a sweet or savory dish? Contact Susan Curran.

- Want to perform? Contact Jim Petosa.
- General questions? Contact April Bargout or any of the committee members.
- Want to buy a ticket? Go to the UFPC website, click the donate button to make your \$5.00 donation and make it go to “Event”. We will send you a zoom link. OR...simply send your \$5.00 (or your intent to pay at the night of the event) to any of the committee members and we will make sure you get a zoom link to the event.

Let’s get as many people there as we can! Stay tuned for further information!

Join Our UFPC Zoom Worship Team

Every Sunday morning our online services are created by a team of staff and volunteers, serving in a variety of artistic and logistical roles. We'd love to expand our team! If you are interested in learning more about any of the following roles, please contact Jamie Grassmann, Chair of the Worship Committee, or Rev. Rebecca at rev.rebecca.froom@gmail.com. Some of the roles include:

- serving as a Digital Ushers who manages the Zoom waiting room and facilitates sharing during Joys and Sorrows
- running our slides and any multimedia through the screen share function on Zoom
- giving a chalice lighting reading
- providing music to be recorded ahead of time
- taking or sharing pictures of our UFPC building and grounds to be used in our worship slides
- editing audio or video files ahead of or following worship services

Recordings of Past Worship Services

On Sundays we record our zoom worship services and post them on our YouTube Channel – “United First Parish Church Unitarian Universalist.” You can find links to this year’s worship videos in the worship section of our website at <https://ufpc.org/weekly-services>. Note that we do not include the sharing during Joys and Sorrows in our recorded services.

United First Parish Church on Facebook

Did you know that UFPC has a Facebook Page and a newly created Facebook Group? Our Facebook Page is called United First Parish Church (Unitarian Universalist) found at <https://www.facebook.com/UFPC.UU>. On our Facebook Page we post announcements of upcoming services and events, and recordings of past services, as well as reflections on the monthly theme or holidays. Our newly created Facebook Group is called “United First Parish Church Virtual Community.”

Visitor Program Vignettes

By Bill Westland

The first of a new year is always a good time to reflect a little and even try to show how times have changed a little bit for the better, even though they are still turbulent. A tremendous change took place in the 2016 Presidential election where not only did you have a female candidate, Hillary Clinton, running in the election itself for the Democrats, but three Republican women, Carla Fiora, former CEO of Hewlett Packard, Michelle Bachmann, Representative from Minnesota and Sarah Palin former Governor of Alaska, tried to get the Republican nomination. Then in the 2020 Presidential election six women tried to get the Democratic nomination to run for President, Senators Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota, Kamala Harris of California, Kirsten Gillibrand of New York, Representative Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii and author, Marianne Williamson. Of course, in the election itself Senator Harris was elected to be Vice President of the United States. This would never have happened a few years ago. Back in the Presidential election of 1984 Geraldine Ferraro ran for Vice President along with Presidential candidate Fritz Mondale on the Democratic ticket and they were soundly defeated by Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush on the Republican ticket. I

thought that it might be interesting to take a quick look at the history of the early women's movement and its effect upon both American society and politics.

Some of the first women who had a tremendous impact upon the status and role of women were Lucretia Mott, Linda Martha Child and Maria Chapman Weston, who incidentally was from the neighboring town of Weymouth, as were her three sisters. Ms. Weston founded the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society in 1835. The anti-slavery and abolitionist movements had always been dominated by male ministers and this female intrusion was resented. Even liberal Unitarian ministers were at best lukewarm about women being involved. It didn't help when Ms. Weston said that the divisions in the abolitionist movement were really driven by the controversy over women's rights. When she was appointed to the board of the Anti-slavery Society one of the members complained "that to put a woman on a committee with men is contrary to the rights of a civilized society." Even in the middle of the 19th century the attitude toward women hadn't changed that much from the 16th century when John Knox, the Scottish follower of John Calvin and founder of Presbyterianism, said: "It is a thing most repugnant in nature that women rule and govern men. A woman promoted to teach, to judge or to reign above men is a monster in nature, contrary to God, and a thing most repugnant to His will and ordinance." In the famous trial of United First Parish's own Anne Hutchinson for blasphemy in 1638, Governor John Winthrop accused her "of usurping male authority." Our interim minister, Dave Johnson, told me one time that a good portion of these early humorless, unbending, puritanical males must have suffered from peptic ulcers. He might have been right.

In spite of male opposition, women were important to the anti-slavery movement. For example, Maria Chapman Weston became the editor of anti-slavery activist, William Lloyd Garrison's newspaper, "The Liberator." She also wrote a number anti-slavery articles for the paper and was a major fund raiser for the abolitionist movement. Other women played key roles in various anti-slavery organizations. The women's suffrage movement really took off after the Civil War. When the 14th Amendment became law in 1868 granting the right to vote to Black male ex-slaves in the South, no mention was made of women in either the North or the South. This infuriated many women who had worked so hard in the anti-slavery movement. The more militant groups of women organized and demanded the right to vote. The words of Maria Chapman Weston from her anti-slavery days: "Let us rise in the moral power of womanhood and give utterance to the voice of outraged mercy" seemed to resonate throughout the movement.

An interesting alliance developed between these suffragettes and the women's temperance societies. Some of the most vociferous opponents to women's suffrage were the city political machines. Many of the ward bosses would hold court in the local saloons and dispense rewards such as city jobs, turkeys at Thanksgiving, free coal deliveries in the winter time etc. for political loyalty. In fact, sometimes your reward would be higher if you could figure out a way to vote more than once. Trump's "voter fraud" issue is nothing new, and was quite common in some of your machine-controlled cities. The difference is that it actually happened back then. In the minds of these ward bosses giving the vote to women might upset the applecart and they might lose control. As a result of this rather odd alliance of the women's suffrage and temperance groups, the 18th Amendment, or Prohibition, was passed in 1919 and the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote in 1920. One interesting bit of minutia is that as of this moment in time, 11,372 amendments to the United States Constitution have been proposed but only 27 have ever become the law of the land. I can't resist to also tell you that back in the 1970's the president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union was Mrs. Fred C. Tooze. Time magazine loved to refer to her as "Mrs. Tooze, rhymes with booze." She actually had a good sense of humor because she introduced herself one time at the WCTU convention saying: "My name is Tooze, which rhymes with booze, and I'm against it."

Back in 1770 Abigail Adams wrote her famous "remember the ladies" letter to husband, John, when he was in Philadelphia at the Continental Congress working on the structure of the new government. She wrote: "I desire that you would remember the ladies and be more generous than your ancestors." John ignored her advice. However, John Quincy Adams had a different outlook than his father. When he was a Congressman in 1838 and received a petition from a group of women which the House of Representatives refused to hear, he scolded the House members by saying: "Why does it follow that women are fitted for nothing but care of domestic life, bearing children and cooking food for the family? I say that women exhibited the most exalted virtue when they depart the domestic circle and enter the concerns of their country, of humanity and their God." However, it will be another 82 years before women will have the right to vote.

Even though Abigail and John Quincy Adams advocated women's rights, it wasn't until 1870 that United First Parish Church granted full church membership to women. This only happened because the Massachusetts

legislature passed a law in 1869 “to allow religious societies to admit women to full membership and full rights and privileges.” Our minister, John Doane Wells, urged the board of UFPC to comply with the new law. The board then voted to “admit ladies as members in accordance with the act of the legislature.” However, there was a stipulation that women could be disqualified for accusations of “immoral or promiscuous behavior.” As you can see, women have come a long way, and we now have a woman who is only a heartbeat from being President of the United States. The year 2020 was not a complete washout in spite of the pandemic.

WORSHIP SERVICES

Sunday morning worship services are held at 10:30 am on Zoom. An email will be sent to the congregation on Friday or Saturday with the order of service and the link to the Zoom worship. The link is also posted on Facebook and our website.

[February 7]

“The Good You Dream for Us”

Joan McDonald, Karl DeBisschop, David Downs and Albert Vaughn

Since September, the Antiracism Book Group has been reading and reflecting on the book *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo. Join us as we reflect on the questions: What am I not doing to be an anti-racist? What can I do because of who I am and the power and privilege I possess?

[February 14]

“Side with Love Sunday”

What if to “side with love” meant making bold, faith-full choices? What if it were even a little bit scary? This worship service brings together worship leaders and musicians from across the country to offer hopeful, moving, challenging reminders about what we, as Unitarian Universalists, are called to do, and BE, in the world.

[February 21]

Rev. Rebecca Froom

[February 28]

Rev. Rebecca Froom

Church Staff and Lay Leaders

Staff: Rev. Rebecca Froom (Senior Minister), Rev. Dr. Sheldon Bennett (Minister Emeritus), Rev. Dr. Michelle Walsh (Affiliate Community Minister), Nan Moore (Affiliate Lay Community Minister), Joan McDonald (Religious Education Director), David Bousquin (Office and Property Manager), Norman Corey (Music Director).

Board of Governors: Lisa Howe (President), Jim Petosa (Vice-President), Erwin Schaareman (Treasurer), Clyde Cortright (Assistant Treasurer), April Bargout (Clerk), Jamie Grassmann (Worship), Marie-Louise Jackson-Miller (Religious Education), Susan Curran and Sarah Belfort (Social Justice Action), Elizabeth Black (Communications), Brenda Reed (Congregational Life)

Committee on Ministry: Kate Hurley (Chair), David Downs, Frances Spillane

Nominating Committee: Marie-Louise Jackson-Miller (Chair), Jacqueline Rodriguez, Fiona Sankey

Contact Us

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