



Stone Temple News

September 2022

[OPEN THE ATTACHMENT FOR ACTIVE LINKS]

From the Minister's Study

By Rev. Rebecca Froom

From students and teachers returning to school, to Rosh Hashanah, the celebration of the Jewish New Year, September is a time of new beginnings. Perhaps you are embracing new possibilities this year in your own life, accompanied by the mix of excitement and anxiety that is often part of such transitions. At the height of the harvest season, September is also a time that embodies the growth and fullness of life. This is a time of sweet abundance when we savor the taste of a fresh peach or apple, and it is also a time to prepare food – and ourselves – for the coming of winter. Perhaps you likewise find yourself in a middle-space of life balancing between abundance and preparation.

Wherever you find yourself this season I hope you will join us on Sunday, September 11th as we gather for our annual Ingathering worship service when we return to the sanctuary for the start of a new worship-year. Like last year we will gather outside our front portico around 10:15 am to greet one another and listen to beautiful music on violin and cello. And then we will enter our sanctuary together at 10:30 am. This service includes our annual Water Ceremony, so we encourage you to bring water from a place that is meaningful to you; we will also have water present in the sanctuary so that all may participate in the water ceremony.

Here at UFPC we have some exciting new beginnings to celebrate as we welcome people into new staff roles. McKayla Hoffman (they/them pronouns) will be joining us as our Ministerial Intern for two church-years! McKayla is a Master of Divinity Student at Meadville Lombard Theological School. They will take on a variety of roles in worship and throughout the life of the church. This newsletter includes an introductory letter from McKayla.

Over the last six months our Board of Governors, Religious Education Committee, and I have collaborated together to revision how we staff our lifespan religious education programs and support our families. We are moving from having a Director of Religious Education to having a Director of Family Ministry. This year we are beginning a two-year pilot program for “Family Ministry in the 21st Century.” This pilot program will have multigenerational programming grounded in our Unitarian Universalist Principles as embodied in practices of mindfulness, earth care, and music and the arts, as well as monthly gatherings for families. Our children’s religious education programming begins on Sunday, September 18th when our service focuses on the theme of “The Power of Connection.” We will introduce you to our new Director of Family Ministry on September 11th!

As September approaches, I hope that you will find moments to appreciate the beauty of late summer sunlight and the promises of the coming season.

In peace and joy,
Rev. Rebecca

From Our Ministerial Intern

By McKayla Hoffman

Greetings! My name is McKayla Hoffman (they/them), and I am thrilled to meet you all and begin our journey together! I am writing from my apartment in Somerset, where I live with my fiancé and two rambunctious cats. I come to you humbled by my experiences of our wider faith movement. Since 2011, I've been a member of First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church in Bridgewater. My home congregation's open hearts and dedication to justice inspired me greatly, and I felt a call to ministry in 2014. After pursuing my passions in archaeology, public history, nonprofit fundraising, and education for a few years, I decided to finally answer the call and begin seminary part-time at Meadville Lombard Theological School in 2019. Since then, I've been honored to serve as church administrator at First Parish Bridgewater, youth advisor at First Parish Duxbury, and long-term guest preacher and volunteer at First Parish Taunton. It's been an exciting journey (at a lot of "First Parish's"!) that brings me to you, where our journeys intertwine.

When I begin any journey, I look to my heroes--fictional or otherwise--for inspiration. For me, that is Samwise Gamgee from the Lord of the Rings trilogy. I think of the long, hard journey he took with best friend Frodo. After one challenging trial-by-fire, Frodo felt determined to complete the remainder of the journey alone, without his community by his side. When Frodo told Sam "I'm going to Mordor alone," Sam replied, "Of course you are--and I'm coming with you!" I look forward to companioning with you all as Sam did for Frodo, on those journeys that are ours--and as a cheerleader for those journeys that are yours!

Beloveds, we've each carried burdens that began for so many in 2020--and for others long before that. Indeed, it is difficult to know when we will have come out on the other side. But I've learned of your strength and your hearts. I've learned about the good work of UFPC's Social Justice Action Committee and their commitment to relationships with community partners. I've learned of your public engagement around history and dedication to telling the story of your church and the incredible women (oh yes, and two presidents) who rest in your care. And, because of what you've built together, the road ahead is full of exciting possibility.

Know that over these next two years, through whatever challenge and triumph we will face, I am honored to do the good work of loving the world by your side. I can't wait to continue getting to know you all and starting learning from you!

See you all in September!

Blessings on your way,
McKayla Hoffman

From Our President

By Jim Petosa

The UFPC Board of Governors Welcomes All to a New Church Year. September 11 is our Ingathering worship service. It's always a special day to welcome the start of a new cycle of life, together, in our community. Last year we worked as a Board to identify "portals of access" to our congregation. From that work we put our focus and resources on Worship, Family Ministry (reconceived from our traditional religious education program), History and Visitors program (along with its counterpart in Historic Preservation of our beloved church building), Social Justice work, Music Ministry, and Arts and Culture. This, of course, does not preclude other priorities or interests, but does provide some focus to help us in the year that is beginning.

The Board of Governors is pleased to welcome McKayla Hoffman as our ministerial intern. Their dynamic energy is infectious and I have no doubt that they will have a profound impact on our journey together over the course of the next two years. Please give them a warm and enthusiastic welcome!

Committees are forming under continuing or new leadership. Consider getting involved if you are not already! The Order of Service will list the Board of Governors and the Program Chairpersons so you can feel free to contact the person who is guiding an area of interest to you.

Our September 11 service will be quite special, building on the re-opening of the sanctuary of last year. It will be a special way of experiencing our intent to start this new church year, empowered and invigorated by each other's presence in our lives.

On behalf of the entire UFPC Board of Governors, I am happy to welcome you as we begin anew!

Jim Petosa
President, UFPC Board of Governors

Reflections on the September Theme of BELONGING
From Soul Matters Sharing Circle

You hardly knew
how hungry you were
to be gathered in,
to receive the welcome
that invited you to enter
entirely...
You began to breathe again...
You learned to sing.

But the deal with this blessing
is that it will not leave you alone,
will not let you linger...
this blessing
will ask you to leave,
not because it has tired of you
but because it desires for you
to become the sanctuary
that you have found...

– Jan Richardson

Richardson begins with hunger. And so do we. Just saying the word “belonging” conjures it up: The primal hunger to be included; the longing to be let in. No one likes standing outside the circle. No one likes leaning against the locked door listening while everyone is laughing inside. From the time we are little, belonging is the thing we seek. It’s the hoped-for Holy Grail. The promised resting place.

But Richardson will have none of that. Our own belonging is only the beginning. That’s what she wants us to know. One minute she’s wrapping us in comforting words about settling in and allowing ourselves to finally breathe. The next she’s shaking us awake and telling us to get up and go.

That shaking should tell us something. In other words, this is no gentle invitation, friends. No sweet reminder to think of others. It’s a warning. A desperate hope that we will wake to the fact that there are two kinds of belonging: one that wants to bless us and another that wants to enlist us.

Deep down we know this. The hard part is to remember it. To use Richardson’s language, if we find ourselves being invited to linger rather than leave, alarm bells should go off. We need to be weary of those who welcome us with a club jacket and a soft couch. They may have let us in, but soon they will enlist us into the work of keeping others out. There will likely even be a part of us that wants to keep others out. After all, closed circles don't just set us apart, they sit us above.

But they also keep us small. Maybe this is why Richardson’s blessing is so intent on not leaving us alone. It knows that we only grow when the circle does. Circles that keep others out also keep the air out. No one inside a closed circle truly sings; they only suffocate, slowly. It’s all one big reminder that the true blessing of belonging is not that you get to come inside the circle; it’s that you get to participate in expanding it. Again, as the circle grows so do we.

WORSHIP SERVICES

Worship services are held on Sunday mornings at 10:30 am in-person and via livestream.

[September 11]

“Joined Together: Ingathering Sunday”

Rev. Rebecca Froom

This Sunday we gather for our annual multigenerational Ingathering worship service as we return to our UFPC sanctuary for a new “worship-year.” We will celebrate our Water Ceremony - pouring water into a common bowl, symbolizing how our community is formed from the experiences of our individual lives. This day we also celebrate our shared ministry, commissioning our elected leaders for their work this year and offering blessings on our new Ministerial Intern, McKayla Hoffman, and our new Director of Faith Development. Music will be provided by our own Norman Corey along with Jagan Nath Khalsa on violin, Holly Wielsma on cello, and Jerry Bellows on recorder. **You are invited to gather between 10:15 and 10:30 am in front of our church portico, so that we might enter our sanctuary together.** Please bring water from a place that is meaningful to you for our Water Ceremony; water will also be provided at the church.

[September 18]

“The Power of Connection”

Rev. Rebecca Froom

The past few years have revealed a deepening loneliness and longing for belonging in this country. In this service we reflect on how we can cultivate connection and community in a society that is prone to isolation and division. This Sunday we also begin our Sunday morning religious education programming for children, introducing a new model of “Spirit Circles” which will use experiential learning practices of mindfulness, the arts, and earth care, to explore our UU Principles.

[September 25]

Rev. Rebecca Froom

As Rosh Hashanah approaches, we reflect on the insights and wisdom from the Jewish High Holy Days.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

For our most up-to-date announcements, please see our “Weekly Announcements” which are emailed to the congregation on Thursdays or Fridays, posted on our website, and available by print on Sunday mornings.

Water for Our Water Ceremony

You are invited to bring water to contribute to our annual Water Ceremony during our Ingathering worship service on September 11th. The water can be from a place that is meaningful to you (near or far) and/or it can symbolize something important about your life journey as summer turns towards fall. In the Water Ceremony, we each have the opportunity to pour our water into a common bowl and together our waters will become the “Holy Water” of our community. Water will also be available in the sanctuary, so that everyone can participate!

“Art From Inside: 50 Years of the Prison Book Program”

Throughout the month from September, we will host the traveling art exhibit “Art From Inside,” created by Prison Book Program, a social justice literacy program in residence at United First Parish Church. Prison Book Program has been sending packages of free, hand-selected books to people in prison since 1972. Art From Inside is a selection of works that have been sent to Prison Book Program over the course of those 50 years. Each piece in the show was sent by an incarcerated reader, often as a token of gratitude for a shipment of books.

“Family Ministry for the 21st Century”

VERY EXCITING NEWS! Our Minister Rev Rebecca Froom, Board President Jim Petosa, and the Religious Education Committee collaborated in bringing forth a new model and pilot program for lifespan religious education 2022-2023. SPIRIT CIRCLE!

This experiential model of learning will focus on Mindfulness, Music and the Arts, and Earth Carers. The 7 Unitarian Universalist Principles will be our guidance. CREATIVE AND FUN!

Look for the SPIRIT CIRCLE flyer in the Order of Service on Sunday, September 11th at our Ingathering Water Ceremony worship announcing our NEW Director of Family Ministry. STAY TUNED!

Celebration of Life for Virginia Wigmore

Saturday, September 17, 4:00 pm

Virginia “Vee” Wigmore (1926-2021) was a long time and beloved member of United First Parish Church. Vee moved to Washington state in 2017 to be near family. She died in 2021 of esophageal cancer. This September 17th we will gather in the sanctuary to remember Virginia. A reception will follow at the home of Brenda and John Reed.

Sunday Morning Meditation

Sundays, 9:00 am, in-person

We will have meditation on Sunday mornings at 9:00 am outside in the garden, weather permitting, and in the church parlor (with masks) when it rains. Our practice includes guided, walking, and silent meditation. Feel free to contact Marie-Louise at mariejm1961@yahoo.com or 857-526-2579.

Standout Quincy for Black Lives

Thursdays, 3:30–5:30 pm, in-person

UFPC partners with Quincy for Transformative Change for an **initiative** in support of Black Lives Matter. We stand either on the church front steps or on the intersection of Temple and Washington streets 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 contact me at 617-272-0274 or artclaire@comcast.net. Thank you, Claire Fitzmaurice.

2022-2023 Book Group Calendar

Our Year of Reading Dangerously

The Book Group meets on the first Thursday of the Month from 7:00 to 8:30 pm, with a gap in summer and in December. All members and friends are welcome to join us. We will conduct our meetings in-person and on

Zoom. Each year, we choose a variety of genres and forms. This Church Year all our selections are in response to book banning across the United States. You are welcome to come even if you have not finished the book.

September 8, 2022

[Note: 2nd Thursday]

The Hate U Give

Angie Thomas (2017)

October 6, 2022

Inherit the Wind

Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee (1955)

November 3, 2022

Banned in Boston: The Watch and Ward Society's Crusade against Books, Burlesque and the Social Evil

Neil Miller (2010)

January 5, 2023

Satanic Verses

Salman Rushdie (1988)

February 2, 2023

The Bluest Eye

Toni Morrison (1970)

March 2, 2023

Gender Queer: a Memoir

Maia Kobabe (2014)

April 6, 2023

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian

Sherman Alexie (2007)

May 4, 2023

The Invisible Man

Ralph Ellison (1952)

June 1, 2023

Between the World and Me

Ta-Nehisi Coates (2015)

2022-2023 Writing Group Calendar

Our UFPC Writing Group will be meeting again this year. We will meet the first Sunday of the month in-person in the parlor at 12:00 pm. There are no meetings in January or June. As in past years, 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 1 hour. Contact facilitator Jim Petosa at jimjamespeto@aol.com or 301-442-3781.

October 2, 2022

November 6, 2022

December 4, 2022

February 5, 2023

March 5, 2023

April 2, 2023

May 7, 2023

Soul Matters Small Group Ministry Begins in October!

Soul Matters groups bring together a group of 6-12 people once a month to reflect on a monthly theme through a format that encourages personal reflection and fosters deeper connection with other members and friends of the congregation. The format includes: chalice lighting, sitting in stillness, check-in, readings on the theme, sharing in response to questions and spiritual exercises on the theme, check-out, and closing words. Registration details will be forthcoming in our weekly announcements in mid-September. The themes for 2022-2023 are:

October: Courage
November: Change
December: Wonder
January: Finding Our Center
February: Love
March: Vulnerability
April: Resistance
May: Creativity
June: Delight

Visitor Program Vignettes

By Bill Westland

September 26, 2022 will be the 383rd anniversary of the gathering of United First Parish Church, or Church of Christ, as it was called back then, probably so it would not be confused with the Church of England. For some reason churches are gathered and not founded. In 1634 the town of Boston annexed about fifty square miles of Mount Wollaston in order to satisfy the needs of a growing population. The citizens of this area had to travel to Boston to attend church services, a long trip back then, so in 1636 they petitioned the town of Boston to have their own church and their own minister. They were granted the right to call a minister, but any new church would not be independent but be a branch of the Boston church. That same year Reverend John Wheelwright was called to be the minister and the following year a small rather crude house of worship was built. This church was called The Chapel of Ease because it was easier to get there than to take the long trip to Boston. However, this didn't last long as Reverend Wheelwright and his followers, like Anne Hutchinson, were expelled from the Massachusetts Bay Colony for their liberal beliefs and once again the Mount Wollaston area was without a church.

In 1639 a petition was once again sent to the town of Boston and this time the Boston Church granted permission to gather an independent church and call a minister. In his journal Governor Winthrop wrote that "on September 26, 1639 the inhabitants of Mount Wollaston regathered and entered into new relations by renewing the original covenant." Reverend Thomson was called to be the new minister and in a public ceremony Reverend William Thomson, Reverend Henry Flynt, George Rose, Stephen Kinsley, John Dasset, William Porter, Martin Sanders, and Gregory Belcher signed the original covenant of the Wheelwright church, which stated among other things that the congregation "worship the Lord in Spirit and Truth and to walk in Brotherly Love." Then the signees offered the "Right Hand of Fellowship." Incidentally, to these Puritans the "Right Hand of Fellowship" was derived from the Bible and meant that you were agreeing to serve God and accept the covenant. However, another theory was that it went back to Roman times where your sword was carried in a scabbard on your right side. If you shook hands with your right hand, you couldn't draw your sword at the same time. At any rate, United First Parish church was the fifteenth church to be gathered in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

Here we are 383 years later still an active and strong congregation. This is an amazing accomplishment which not many other churches can equal. We are still holding services but now in our fourth church. The original Chapel of Ease was replaced by a stone meeting house in 1666, the first stone church in New England. It was in the center of town with the schoolhouse on one side and the tavern on the other. The Puritan laws required a town to have both a meeting house and school house if it had a population over a certain number. The tavern was not required by law but most towns had one. The stone meeting house fell into such disrepair that it was

replaced in 1732 by the Hancock Meeting House, a wooden church located at right angles to our current church, and named for Reverend John Hancock, who was the minister at that time very popular. Reverend Hancock served as our minister from 1726 to 1744 and was the father of the famous signer of the Declaration of Independence. In fact, Reverend Hancock baptized both his son, John, and John Adams. In 1828 our current Stone Temple replaced the Hancock Meeting House, which was too small. The Stone Temple is not only a National Historic Landmark but is one of the finest examples of Greek Revival Style architecture in North America. Also, I should point out that Reverend Rebecca Froom, our current minister, is the 24th minister to serve United First Parish Church over these 383 years.

United First Parish Church is the religious home of the two Adams' Presidents, John and John Quincy, plus is also their final resting place along with their First Ladies, Abigail and Louisa Catherine. No other church has such a legacy. We are both a national shrine and an important segment of our American heritage. After starting out as a Puritan Congregational church United First Parish Church has evolved over the years into a Unitarian Universalist congregation. In 1989 Reverend Sheldon Bennett in our 350th anniversary booklet best summed up this evolution when he said: "Through this great sweep of events in three and one-half centuries, the congregation of this historic church has endured, growing in its thought, and addressing the spirit and challenge of each age. The spirit of freedom, the joy of friendship, and the assurance of a faith grounded on practical, reasonable values are what inspire and guide our people. In 1639 the members of this congregation sought to walk with brotherly love and sisterly communication to build a new and free land. Today we seek to help build a new world."

Our United First Parish Church has also always been in the forefront of social causes dating back to its early days. This led John Adams when he was in London in 1785 to say this about his fellow church members back home in Quincy. "The virtues and talents of the people there are formed by temperance, patience, fortitude, prudence and justice, as well as judgement, taste, skill, ingenuity and industry." President George H.W. Bush wrote for our 350th anniversary: "Since 1639 the United First Parish Church has shaped the ideals of our greatest patriots - John Adams, John Hancock, and John Quincy Adams. I commend you for carrying on its 350-year tradition of faith and service to your community." You can see what high standards have been set for us. In this 383rd anniversary year, let's remember how fortunate we are to be associated with such an important church with such an historic background. I also want to point out that at both our 250th anniversary service in 1889 and our 350th anniversary service in 1989 the congregation sang a hymn written by John Quincy Adams for the dedication of our Stone Temple in 1828. No other church can say that the President of the United States wrote a hymn for them to use in a service of celebration of both its 250th anniversary and its 350th years.

Church Staff and Lay Leaders

Staff: Rev. Rebecca Froom (Lead Minister), Rev. Dr. Sheldon Bennett (Minister Emeritus), Nan Moore (Affiliate Lay Community Minister), McKayla Hoffman (Ministerial Intern), David Bousquin (Office and Property Manager), Norman Corey (Music Director)

Board of Governors: Jim Petosa (President), Juan Ramos (Vice-President), Clyde Cortright (Treasurer), Erwin Schaareman (Assistant Treasurer), April Bargout (Clerk), Kim Dangora and Karl DeBisschop (Stewardship), Claire Fitzmaurice (Social Justice Action), Elizabeth Black (Communications), Marie-Louise Jackson-Miller (Congregational Life), Peter Kovach and Kendra Dupiton (Religious Education)

Congregational Committees: Ann Marie Willer (Committee on Ministry), Fiona Sankey (Nominating Committee)

Minister [Rev. Rebecca Froom]: rev.rebecca.froom@gmail.com
Office and Property Manager [David Bousquin]: office@ufpc.org
Music Director [Norman Corey]: norijo@earthlink.net

United First Parish Church, Unitarian Universalist, 1306 Hancock Street, Quincy, Massachusetts 02169
617-773-1290, www.ufpc.org, www.facebook.com/ufpc/uu