



## Stone Temple News

January 2023

### Welcome to the Path of Finding Our Center

A January reflection from Soul Matters theme-based ministry program

When we talk of finding our center, it's natural for calm and rest to be the first things that come to mind. Who would expect anything different? After all, the need for calm is everywhere we look. So, so many of us are tired. We're overworked, over-busy, over-committed, overly scared. We are often so weighed down by responsibility and worry that it only takes one drop of something unexpected to tip us over. So, yes, we long for rest. Yes, we want to swirl to stop.

And yet, helping us find peace and calm is not the only work found on this path of finding our center.

As our faith reminds us, being a "centered person" often involves the opposite of keeping things calm. In order to move toward a balance of justice, we have to upset the current state of things. Oppressive systems need challenged and toppled. And to accomplish that, we need to sacrifice calm and comfort, including our own. We need to remember that achieving a balance of equality requires us to be purposefully off-balance and out-of-step with our culture, or as Martin Luther King Jr. said, we need people who are maladjusted to the way things are.

Add all this up and suddenly "our center" appears to be a much richer place than is often recognized.

It's not simply a place of peace and calm; it's also a place of being pushed and launched. What you hear in this deep space within is not just the whisper of "Rest" and "Breathe," but also "Take a deep breath and jump!" We encounter an invitation there, not just relaxation. It's a still point, yes. But a still point upon which we pivot and turn to something new.

So, as we try to make sense of "finding our center" this month, it's fine to pull up the image of the Buddha sitting peacefully under a tree, but we can't let that overshadow the image of a diver balancing way up there on her diving board, pausing to regain her composure and courage so she can leap and go "all in."

Maybe in the end, instead of only asking each other, "Are you centered these days?" we need to ask, "Where is your center sending you these days?" and "Where is your center calling you to go?"

### Spirit Circle

By Nan Moore, Director of Family Ministry

HAPPY NEW YEAR to all!

**In Review:** This fall has been incredible as we have explored a new Pilot Program that infuses Unitarian Universalism and spirituality into our Spirit Circle. Mindfulness, Music and Earth Care are the soul of these new learning experiences. We have also highlighted being in community with once-a-month multi-generational worship focalised by Rev. Rebecca Froom, McKayla Hoffman and my Self.

Our time with the children has been so inspiring and meaningful for all-including the instructors. It is a whole hearted collaborative effort as we intentionally, yet gradually, build a community that focuses on our relationship of kindness and creating a place for children to thrive. Our Spirit Circle has been very well attended in both children and adult education. The hope is during the winter more adults can participate in our adult education

offerings. NOTE: The 1 pm Music experience, for adults, will continue to be held in the sanctuary near the piano until the tours restart in the spring.

**Present:** During our holiday service on December 18<sup>th</sup>, an older teen, and an elder of the church both picked an angel card for the community. At this time of year with the presence of many angelic stories are shared as a valued part of a tradition that the eco-village community I am a part of in Scotland practices. Every year around the solstice, an angel card is picked and that card will be a focus for the entire year until the next winter solstice. It is a way for us to see how the magical energy can guide us, simply and clearly.

Alex Shaareman randomly picked the angel card SUPPORT for the Spirit Circle community. I just learned today, on the Solstice, the Findhorn community also picked the same angel card SUPPORT, for their community message 2022-2023. When SUPPORT arises within us, we can remember the powerful synchronicity of two communities experiencing the same message as we connect to each other spiritually. For the entire UFPC community elder Bill Westland randomly picked the Angel of TRUST helping to remind us of this two-fold Solstice message. Remember SUPPORT and TRUST as you sit with these messages throughout the year. As we hear this message, let it be in our consciousness as we pay attention to our Self, our relationships, this community and the world.

**Future:** Beginning this month as part of our Spirit Circle pilot we are going to have a pot luck, multiage Community Night, which will include board games, cards or whatever you would like to bring to play with others. The children are encouraged to bring games they would like to share with their UFPC friends following dinner. This multi-generational event will be held on the last Friday of the month, JANUARY 27<sup>th</sup>. Bring a dish between 5:30 and 6 pm and plan to eat promptly at 6 pm ending by 9 pm. Everyone attending is invited to bring a pot luck dish for dinner. Please pay attention to weekly announcements regarding logistics from Brenda Reed who is focalising the event.

### **January Spirit Circle**

The theme for this month is Finding Our Center. Every month a new theme will be interwoven into what instructors teach offering a common ground of spiritual development communally.

**January 1:** Multi-generational Fire CEREMONY (see outline for the worship).

**January 8:** Pajama and MOVIE Sunday! Children are invited to wear their PJ's to church, which has been a UFPC tradition at this time of the New Year. The Spirit Circle will either meet in the parlor or in the Spirit Circle room downstairs (place TBA) With a little luck and a prayer, I am going to try and make a short video of my arrival in Scotland, so you can begin to get a sense of where I am and ways to connect to you from afar – It will be a new creative endeavor for me, so cheers to the Pilot Program! I hope I can get it together in time as I am arriving on January 5<sup>th</sup>. It will be a surprise to me if we can make that happen so quickly! 2 RE HOST TBA.

**January 15:** Earth Carer instruction with Jon Belber. Jon will provide a learning experience for the children related to the wintertime and what we can do to care for the earth and growing preparations in relationship to the earth cycles at this time of year. RE HOST McKayla Hoffman.

**Youth Group Service Project January 15:** The youth group will be making sandwiches for Father Bills in the downstairs kitchen. The organization requested sandwiches for Sunday and Monday. The group will make about 40 sandwiches for Sunday and they need to be delivered on that day. They also requested an additional 30 sandwiches for us to store overnight at church, because they have no storage space. A volunteer is needed to deliver the 30 sandwiches the next day, Monday.

**January 22:** Mindfulness instruction with Paula Webster. We continue learning about mindfulness and paying attention to the world within the child and how to manage the outer world with mindfulness and kindness to others. Following social hour, there will also be an Adult Education Mindfulness class from 1-2pm in Spirit Circle classroom. RE HOST TBA.

**January 29:** Music instruction with Elisabeth Moore. It is time to sing into the new year together learning new songs and reviewing songs already learned. Following social hour, there will be an Adult Education Music class

singing from Taize and Heaven and Earth songs. The class begins at 1 pm ending at 2 pm. Please meet in the sanctuary near the piano promptly at 1 pm. RE HOST TBA.

**Finally**, I will be leaving for Scotland on January 4<sup>th</sup> and will return in June. My work continues here at UFPC as I will be organizing programs with regular direct communication with Rev Rebecca, the RE Committee, volunteers, providing Board of Governance reports, newsletter articles, weekly family letters via email and announcements. I will also have a monthly surprise to bring my presence to you from where I am in a far-away land. We are trying so many new things, let us focus on our working together, learning from mistakes and celebrating our accomplishments. You can reach me at my email address, Whatsapp, Telegram (international free calling) and if you are on an IPHONE we have free texting and Facetime.

May we continue building a community that is spiritual through our connections, sense of belonging and opportunities for meaning making all rooted in our Unitarian Universalist principles and practices.

Shalom, Shanti, Salaam, Paz, Mir, Peace to all as we welcome this new year.

## WORSHIP SERVICES

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

[January 1]  
**“Let Center Lead”**  
McKayla Hoffman

Join McKayla Hoffman and guest musician Tony Winters for a multigenerational, contemporary service and fire communion ritual for the New Year! While we contemplate the year now past, we will release what no longer serves, honor what should remain, and make room for our “center” to lead.

Tony Winters (he/him/his) is a singer/songwriter and multi-instrumentalist from Bridgewater, who specializes in mixing the “sacred” and “secular”, bringing the music we know and love into a spiritual arena. Tony has been the assistant music director at First Parish in Bridgewater for 5 years, and has a lucrative career as a published author, playwright, and musician.

[January 8]  
**“Love That Lets Go”**  
Rev. Elizabeth Nguyen, preaching  
Alex Fam and Callie Jennings, musicians  
Rev. Rebecca Froom and McKayla Hoffman, presiding  
Sunday, January 8, 10:30 am, in-person and livestream

There is so much going on in the big and little picture of our lives. We do not know how it all turns out. Many things are very hard, and many things are possible. We'll explore how love can be the gravity that guides us as we let go of certainty and ride the waves of life as it emerges.

This vibrant, music filled service is brought to us by Sanctuary Boston – a spiritual community of dynamic worship, authentic connection, and transformation for seekers of all kinds. Grounded in Unitarian Universalism, Sanctuary Boston meets for worship on Wednesday evenings and is shaped by the diversity of backgrounds and traditions we each bring with us. This service includes a special offering to support the Sanctuary Boston's Campus Ministry Program.

Rev. Elizabeth Nguyen is a UU community minister and a Migrant Justice Organizer with Community Justice Exchange and a former core team member of The Sanctuary Boston. Alex Fam and Callie Jennings are leaders in The Sanctuary Boston Band.

[January 15]  
Rev. Rebecca Froom

[January 22]  
Rev. Rebecca Froom

[January 29]  
Rev. Rebecca Froom

Join us for our annual Lessons and Carols Christmas Eve service where we celebrate the Christmas story through readings, music, and candlelight.

## 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.

### **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 [marieljm1961@yahoo.com](mailto:marieljm1961@yahoo.com) or 857-526-2579.

### **Choir Rehearsal**

Sundays, 9:30–10:00 am, in-person

The choir welcomes new members! This year, instead of anthems, we are working on hymns to support congregational singing, particularly hymns that are unfamiliar or less familiar. And rehearsals are half an hour, rather than 45 minutes—from 9:30 to 10:00 am every Sunday. Talk to Norman or a choir member, or just show up. Thank you.

### **No Writing Group in January**

### **Standout Quincy for Black Lives**

Thursdays, 3:00–4:30 pm, in-person

UFPC partners with Quincy for Transformative Change for an initiative in support of Black Lives Matter. We stand in front of the church 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](mailto:artclaire@comcast.net). Thank you, Claire Fitzmaurice.

### **Book Group**

Thursday, January 5, 7:00 pm, on Zoom

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 via 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.

One of the most controversial and acclaimed novels ever written, “The Satanic Verses” is Salman Rushdie’s best-known and most galvanizing book. Set in a modern world filled with both mayhem and miracles, the story begins with a bang: the terrorist bombing of a London-bound jet in midflight. Two Indian actors of opposing sensibilities fall to earth, transformed into living symbols of what is angelic and evil. This is just the initial act in a magnificent odyssey that seamlessly merges the actual with the imagined. It is a key work of our times.

Join by computer: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89427298331>

Join by telephone: 1-646-558-8656, Meeting ID: 894 2729 8331

### **Kindred Spirits Discussion Group for Seniors**

Friday, January 20, 10:00–11:30 am, in-person

Join Rev. Rebecca for a monthly discussion group, grounded in our UU values, where we reflect on current events and pressing social issues. This group is open to seniors aged 60+ and will meet on the third Friday of the month at our church in the parish hall. Coffee and tea are provided! Please contact Rev. Rebecca with any questions at [rev.rebecca.froom@gmail.com](mailto:rev.rebecca.froom@gmail.com) or 617-803-1159. If you need to enter the building via the handicapped accessible entrance, please contact David Bousquin at 617-842-1706.

### **Pathway to Membership**

Part 1: January 22, 12:15–1:45 pm, in-person

Part 2: January 29, 12:15–1:45 pm, in-person

Are you relatively new to United First Parish Church and are interested in getting to know more about the congregation? Or have you been attending UFPC for a while and are considering becoming a member? If you answered yes to either question, Rev. Rebecca invites you to attend a two-part “Pathway to Membership” class in the parlor. In the first session on Sunday, 1/22 we will share our spiritual journeys and reflect on Unitarian Universalist beliefs, practices, and histories. In the second session on Sunday, 1/29 we will learn more about our UU congregation and what it means to be a member of our church. Please RSVP to Rev. Rebecca at [rev.rebecca.froom@gmail.com](mailto:rev.rebecca.froom@gmail.com). While participants will benefit from attending both sessions, it is also okay to attend just one.

### **Visitor Program Vignettes**

By Bill Westland, Church Historian

With the start of this new year of 2023 in a world that seems to have nothing but bad news to report, it seems to be a good time to write about a hodgepodge of items which really are not connected to each other or even that world shaking. In our 384 years, United First Parish Church, had five ministers who were with us for more than twenty-five years each. Henry Flynt served from 1640 to 1668, Moses Fiske from 1672 to 1708, Anthony Wibird from 1759 to 1800, Peter Whitney from 1800 to 1843 and Sheldon Bennett from 1986 to 2012. It is really amazing that from 1759 through 1843, a period of 84 years, United First Parish only had two ministers, Anthony Wibird and Peter Whitney. Incidentally, Reverend Wibird was a delegate to the Massachusetts State Convention in 1788 which ratified the United States Constitution, so much for the separation of church and state. Moses Fiske was minister in 1707 when a second church was built in what is now Braintree Square. Reverend Fiske was very much opposed to this new church because the town budget helped pay the minister’s salary in those days, and he was afraid a second church and a second minister would mean a reduction in his salary. He had fourteen children, a record number for UFPC ministers, so you can see why he was concerned. However, this was nothing compared to Deacon Samuel Bass, who served as a Deacon in the late 1600’s. He lived to be in his nineties, had four wives and 162 children and grandchildren, certainly a church record and perhaps even a world record.

Reverend John Hancock was called to be our minister in 1726. His father was also a minister and known as “Bishop” Hancock because he ruled the towns of Lexington and Cambridge like an old-fashioned bishop of the Catholic Church. “Bishop” Hancock not only got his son the job at United First Parish, but negotiated a 10% pay increase over the previous minister, Joseph Marsh, and a new house, not bad for a new minister without any experience. The Hancock house was located on the current site of the Quincy Historical Society’s Adams Academy. Reverend Hancock fortunately turned out to be one of our most respected ministers. He also baptized

both his son, John Hancock, famous signer of the Declaration of Independence, and John Adams. A microfilm copy of these baptisms is on display in our crypt corridor. When Reverend Hancock passed away his son John was only seven. "Bishop" Hancock wanted him to come live with him and become a minister. However, the seven-year-old went to live with his uncle, who was a very successful merchant in Boston. It is interesting to speculate if history would have been different if young John had gone with his grandfather and become a minister. We will never know. Speaking of ministers, our current minister, Reverend Rebecca Froom, is the 24<sup>th</sup> minister to serve UFPC.

Long time church member, Josiah Quincy, was mayor of Boston from 1823 to 1828 and built the Quincy Market. He then became the president of Harvard, a combination which I am sure you will never see again. He was so revered at Harvard that they named one of their student houses after him. Quincy House became one of the most popular student residences at Harvard. Incidentally, the third president of Harvard back in the late 1690's was UFPC member, Leonard Hoar, who never received the same honor. I wonder why. Jonathan Belcher, a descendant of Gregory Belcher (who was one of the signers of the UFPC 1639 Covenant) in 1747 as Governor of New Jersey, moved Princeton College from Newark to its current location. This greatly increased its size and popularity. Later on when Woodrow Wilson was president of Princeton, a new dorm was built and a group wanted to name it after Jonathan Belcher. President Wilson refused because he said that Belcher was a name that was improper for a college dorm. It was not dignified and the students would make fun of it. It shows you that your last name can be a real liability, like the Hoars and Belchers. However, back in the 1890's Governor Hogg of Texas named his daughter Ima. Even with this name Ms. Hogg became a lioness in oil rich Texas society.

Josiah Quincy Jr, son of Josiah Quincy, was also a mayor of Boston. William Ellery Channing, the important 19<sup>th</sup> century Unitarian minister, had a son, Alan Wayne Channing. Reverend Channing wanted his son to be a minister, but the son wasn't at all interested. However, he was fascinated with the telegraph of Samuel Morse, and then invented a fire alarm system based upon the telegraph. Josiah Quincy Jr. had this alarm system installed in Boston in 1845. Boston was the first city in the United States to have a fire alarm system thanks to Quincy and Channing. Josiah Quincy III, grandson of Josiah Quincy, was also a mayor of Boston and was responsible for the building of the South Station in the late 1890's. At the time, it was considered to be one of the most important railroad terminals in the country. In case you missed it, it was recently renamed the Dukakis Transportation Center in honor of Governor Michael Dukakis. Nobody was more opposed to slavery than John Quincy Adams and nobody was ever more in favor of slavery than John C. Calhoun, and yet together with architect, Charles Bullfinch, founded the All-Souls Unitarian church in Washington, D.C. Calhoun was also a pallbearer at the John Quincy Adams funeral. Political opponents didn't seem to hate each other back then and could cooperate with each other. When we celebrated our 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1989 we received a proclamation from Massachusetts Governor Dukakis and also one from President George H.W. Bush, who had defeated Governor Dukakis the year before in the 1988 presidential election. Can you imagine this happening now?

Speaking of mayors, when Quincy adopted the elected mayor-council type of government in 1889, the first elected mayor was church member, Charles H. Porter, a descendant of one of the signers of our original church charter in 1639. Other church members who were elected to serve as mayor were Charles F. Adams in 1896, Russell A. Sears in 1898, John O. Hall in 1900, Eugene R. Stone in 1912, Joseph L. Whiton in 1917, William A. Bradford in 1921, Pereley E. Barbour in 1925 and Thomas S. Burgin, who was elected in 1935 and again in 1950. If any of you church members are interested in local politics and are residents of Quincy, we have not had a church member elected to the office of mayor since 1952, when Burgin's term was over. Just in case any of you have political ambitions, I guess that we are way overdue.

### **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 DeBissschop (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)

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