



Stone Temple News

February 2024

From the Minister's Study

By Rev. Rebecca Froom, Lead Minister

One year before I began attending Unitarian Universalist Sunday school at the age of four, the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) adopted what we know as “The Seven Principles.” These Seven Principles made their way into the artwork, sermons, curricula, music, and hearts of Unitarian Universalists across the continent. For most of us, these principles have likely been the foundational document to explain to ourselves and our curious friends what Unitarian Universalism is. For almost 40 years, the Seven Principles have called us to “affirm and promote”:

1. The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
2. Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
3. Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
4. A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
5. The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
6. The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
7. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

What I didn't know as a child was that these Seven Principles are officially housed in Article II of the UUA's bylaws. They are part of a section titled “Purposes and Principles” that includes the Seven Principles, a list of Six Sources that our living tradition draws on, as well as brief statements about the UUA's purposes, and our commitments to inclusion and freedom and belief. While I didn't know what bylaws were as a child, my UU religious education taught me that our values matter, that our values have roots, and that our values connect us.

Over the last several years UUs have been working on a substantial rearticulation of Article II in the UUA's bylaws (the bylaws themselves require periodic review and revision). While much of the language and many of the sentiments from the 1980's remains, it has taken a renewed form in a section called “Purposes and Covenant.” This new wording affirms that “Love is the power that holds us together,” and places six core values of Interdependence, Pluralism, Justice, Transformation, Generosity, and Equity around that central value of Love.

For the last year our congregation has been reflecting on this new articulation of our shared values in some of our worship services and Soul Matters small group ministry materials. During our Midyear Congregational Meeting on Sunday, February 11th following worship, we will distribute the full text of the proposed Article II revisions of our UU purposes, covenant, and values. Our Ministerial Intern, McKayla Hoffman, will lead us in a conversation about these (re)newed values statements. Will have the time to ask and answer process questions, and to consider our ideas and questions for how we might use these new shared values as a congregation in the future. I hope you will join us for this important conversation!

Sprit Circle

By Nan Moore, Director of Family Ministry

This is a time in our planetary history where we have become attuned to climate and earth changes, but the earth cycles of the solstice and the equinox remain pretty much the same every year, give or take a day. At this time of year Imbolc, which is a pagan holiday, is celebrated from February 1st through sundown February 2nd. Imbolc is based on the Celtic tradition that was meant to mark the halfway point between the winter solstice and the spring equinox in Neolithic Ireland and Scotland. I am here in Scotland where most people celebrate Imbolc in

gatherings, rituals, singing, and dancing, which also marks the beginning increase of daylight. Each day there is 5 more minutes of light, so over 2 weeks around Valentine's Day we gain 1 hour of light and by the end of February 2 1/2 hours more of light. The Light is in us and around us. May we see the light as our invitation to Earth Care by being awake and aware as we learn about our UFPC alive-lihood in our Spirit Circle.

Spirit Circle is a cultural change, and UFPC leadership has been intentionally taking small steps in becoming an inclusive multigenerational community, with patience, insight, re-evaluation, and care. Examples thus far since 2022 are – ALL children enter the church together for our weekly worship rituals and leave for Spirit Circle together after the Message for All Ages; many multigenerational services; game night; Spirit Circle adult education with mindfulness and music; and service projects. Looking at 2024 we are adding some multigenerational additions that will be put in the weekly announcements advertising timely details. Here is an introduction of what is coming:

Multigenerational Events:

- February 4: The youth group, advisors, minister and any other adults interested will be going to the mosque at the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center (ISBCC Roxbury).
- April 7: There will be a 1:00 pm afternoon art workshop (TBA) with Art instructor, Max Olson.
- April 28: We are invited for another Holly Hill farm workday from 1:00-3:00 pm.

Spirit Circle:

- February 4: Instructor Olga Popova will continue teaching music with the children during Spirit Circle and RE Helper Mariah Maines will be supporting and assisting Olga.
- February 11: Creative Art with instructor Max Olson focused on the theme of Justice and Equity. Making paper chains representing how we all have a place and are strongest when we work together; RE helper.
- February 18: Mindfulness and Tai Chi with Paula Webster encouraging stillness and movement into the lives of children as a practice; RE helper.
- February 25: Olga Popova will continue teaching the children the naming song and rhythm to sing and dance/march to; RE Helper Mariah Maines will be assisting this Sunday.

Youth Group:

- February 4: Field trip to the ISBCC mosque in Roxbury. Meet in the parish hall ready to leave at 12:15 pm. Youth members can go with the advisors or their families for this outing. The private guided tour for UFPC will begin at 1:00 pm and end at 2:00 pm.

Reminder: Here is the Angel Card that Father Solstice picked for our community to reflect on throughout the year. What does the Angel of Release ask you to reflect on this year? What do you need to let go of? What no longer serves you for your highest good? What is this message for you?

Welcome to the Gift of Justice and Equity

A reflection from Soul Matters Sharing Circle theme-based ministry program

Here we go again. Another injustice. Even more inequity exposed.

So much pain. So many issues. So little equality.

And so, so many people with certainty.

I wish I had it. Don't you?

The crystal-clear clarity of who's right and who's wrong. Every aspect of their argument neatly lined up. Nothing at all left to doubt.

But when I wake, so much ambivalence shares my bed. So weary am I of having to announce my position right away. So worried about my limited view. So concerned that my people will no longer consider me one of their own if I express my doubts.

But answer I must. Isn't that true?

What does justice look like in this case? What is the next right step? What is the correct point of view?

Just put my mind to it. Reason will guide me and show me the way.

But what if we've got the starting point all wrong? What if my mind - and yours - is not enough? What if the place to begin is not "How do I answer these questions?" But "Who do I need to help me think them through?"

This is the plea of that lawyer serving those on death row. "Get proximate!" he pleads. To change the world, we must get close to those on the margins. We must hear what they have to say. We must see the world with their weary eyes.

Amen, cry those Latin American priests who placed the word liberation in front of their theology. Blessed are the poor, they teach, not just because they will inherit the earth, but because they view our earthly woes most clearly.

Their gift to me, to you, to us is to remember that the answers to injustice arise from relationship, as much as, if not more than, from reason.

Who, not how. Who, not how. What if that is the place to begin? What if this is the way we change the world?

WORSHIP SERVICES

Worship services are held on Sunday mornings at 10:30 am [unless otherwise stated] in-person and via livestream.

[February 4]

"Imperfect Courage"

Rev. Rebecca Froom

As the Hamas-Israel war continues to rage, and the humanitarian disaster in Gaza continues to deepen, how are we called to respond? In our congregation's covenant which we read each Sunday, we say that we are a fellowship that "strives for justice, compassion, and peace." What might that feel and look like at this time?

[February 11]

"The World We are Making"

Rev. Rebecca Froom

John Muratore, guest musician

We are living in times of tremendous change, challenge, and possibility. Our actions, and inactions, influence the future of our lives and the life of our planet. This reality is daunting but not without hope and opportunity. As the cycles of the season begin to turn towards spring, and as our Christian siblings in faith enter the reflective season of Lent that culminates in the celebration of Easter, we take time to consider the ways in which we can build a just and equitable world. Classical guitarist, John Muratore returns to our sanctuary to share his music in our service.

[February 18]

McKayla Hoffman, Ministerial Intern

[February 25]

"Spiritual Practices for Social Change"

Rev. Rebecca Froom

Buddhist teacher Sharon Salzberg has written, “I would never suggest that meditation, prayer or positive thoughts are a replacement for action. But I know I need to connect to something bigger, repeatedly, to have energy to keeping acting.” On this Sunday we reflect on the ways spiritual practices can sustain us in the work of creating a just and equitable world.

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.

Book Group

Thursday, February 1, 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. We try to select a balance of styles. You are welcome to come even if you have not finished the book.

The book this month is [A Raisin in the Sun](#) a play by Lorraine Hansberry that debuted on Broadway in 1959. The title comes from the poem “Harlem” by Langston Hughes. The story tells of a black family’s experiences in south Chicago, as they attempt to improve their financial circumstances with an insurance payout following the death of the father, and deals with matters of housing discrimination, racism, and assimilation. The New York Drama Critics’ Circle named it the best play of 1959, and in recent years publications such as “The Independent” and “Time Out” have listed it among the best plays ever written.

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

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

Sunday Morning Meditation

Sundays, 9:00–9:45 am, in-person

Meditation is offered on Sunday mornings from 9:00am to 9:45 am. We meet in the parlor, and when weather permits, we meet outside in the garden. We begin with a poem by Thich Nhat Hahn to center our intentions, followed by a walking meditation, then silent meditation, and ending with sharing our thoughts and insights. Feel free to contact Marie-Louise at 857-526-2579 or mariejm1961@yahoo.com.

Writing Group

Sunday, February 4, 12:00 pm, in-person

Our UFPC Writing Group will be meeting again this year. We usually 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 forty-five minutes to one hour. Contact facilitator Jim Petosa at jimjamespeto@aol.com or 301-442-3781.

Islamic Society of Boston Multigenerational Field Trip

100 Malcolm X Blvd, Roxbury, Massachusetts 02120

Sunday, February 4, 12:15 pm, in-person

Following Sunday worship, all are invited to a rescheduled multi-age field trip to the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center (ISBCC Roxbury). Please meet in the parish hall to carpool planning to leave no later than 12:15 pm. The ISBCC community is offering us a private tour of the facility from 1:00 to 2:00 pm. Please join us as we meet our Islamic neighbors and learn about another Boston local faith community. This is an opportunity for all ages to have a window of insight into the Muslim faith and culture with respect and curiosity.

Grief and Courage Listening Circle: Sharing in Response to the Israel-Hamas War

Saturday, February 10, 4:30–5:45 pm, on Zoom

As the Israel-Hamas war continues into a fifth month, you are invited to gather over zoom for a Grief and Courage Listening Circle to respectfully share what is on your heart in response to the ongoing violence and humanitarian crisis. This listening circle will be facilitated by Rev. Rebecca, utilizing a small group ministry styled format where each person is given time to speak without interruption. The group will begin and end with a reading and brief meditation.

Join by computer: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86862415889>

Join by telephone: 1-646-558-8656, Meeting ID: 868 6241 5889

Mid-Year Congregational Meeting

Sunday, February 11, 12:15–1:30 pm

The Board of Governors invites you to our annual mid-year congregational meeting. Members of our Board and staff will share updates about the life of the congregation. Rev. Rebecca and Ministerial Intern McKayla Hoffman will lead us in a conversation about the Unitarian Universalist Association's current reworking of our UU Purposes and Principles and Sources into a new statement of purposes, values, and inspirations. Childcare will be provided.

Kindred Spirits Discussion Group for Seniors

Friday, February 16, 10:00–11:30 am, in-person

Join us 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 or 617-803-1159. If you need to enter the building via the handicapped accessible entrance, please contact David Bousquin at 617-842-1706.

Presidents' Day Winterfest Quincy

Monday, February 19, 1:00–7:00 pm, in-person

Celebrate Presidents' Day in the City of the Presidents. This free festival, hosted by the City of Quincy, includes interactive games, music and experiences, costumed characters, theatrical street performers, live music, food trucks and more at the Hancock Adams Common, City Hall and Church of the Presidents. For more information visit: <https://discoverquincy.com/events/city-of-quincy-presidents-day-winterfest>.

Meet UFPC: Newcomer Orientation

Sunday, February 25, 12:15–2:15 pm, in-person

Are you new to United First Parish Church? Do you have questions about the congregation, Unitarian Universalism, or how you can become more connected to the community at UFPC? This newcomer orientation,

facilitated by Rev. Rebecca and a lay leader in the congregation, is an opportunity for participants to share their spiritual journeys, learn about Unitarian Universalist history and heritage, and hear more about the path to membership at UFPC. Snacks will be provided, and childcare may be available with one week's advance notice. Please RSVP by emailing Rev. Rebecca Froom at rev.rebecca.froom@gmail.com or filling out the signup sheet in the parish hall during social hour.

Visitors Program Vignettes By Bill Westland, Church Historian

I wrote about negative campaigning four years ago during the Presidential election and again two years ago in the Congressional elections. Unfortunately, it is still relevant, so I am repeating it for this current Presidential election. Although you might be sick of the negative campaigning in this year's Presidential primaries, slanderous and even libelous comments and statements have been part of the American political climate since the start of the Republic.

American politics has always been a blood sport. Instead of Facebook, Twitter and TV ads, plus social media and even artificial intelligence that are all now being used, back then political pamphlets were printed and circulated. Even the Father of Our Country was not immune. When Washington gave his famous "Farewell Address" one pamphleteer referred to it "as the loathing of a sick mind and you (Washington) should ask yourself if you have abandoned good principles or whether you ever had any." Incidentally, one of the nastiest pamphleteers was the grandson of Benjamin Franklin, Benjamin Franklin Bache, who printed really vicious comments about John Adams in the Adams-Jefferson presidential election of 1800.

In that 1800 election John Adams was unfairly attacked and ridiculed by Jefferson supporters, with the endorsement and encouragement of Jefferson, although he would not admit it. Adams was called "a gross hypocrite, a wretch who does not have the science of a magistrate, the politeness of a courier or the courage of a man." He was described in one pamphlet as "old, querulous, bald, blind, crippled and toothless." He was accused of having "a strange compound of ignorance and ferocity, of ignorance and deceit and of being one of the egregious fools upon the continent as well as being slightly out of his mind." In another pamphlet. Adams was also accused of being "the champion of kings, ranks and titles and having the unfortunate foibles of a vanity without bounds." Adams eventually forgave Jefferson for these scurrilous pamphlets, and the later correspondence between these two Founding Fathers about many different subjects is a real treasure.

Abigail Adams never forgave Jefferson for these attacks upon her husband and wrote to Jefferson saying: "I never felt any enmity towards you for being elected president of the United States. But the instruments made use of and the means that were practiced to effect a change have my utter abhorrence and detestation for they were the blackest calumny and foulest falsehoods." Jefferson never replied. John Quincy Adams also never forgave Jefferson for these attacks against his father, and later ironically fell victim to the same kind of vicious and untrue attacks from the Andrew Jackson supporters when Adams ran for reelection in 1828. He was accused of moral and political corruption, trying to be a dictator because he favored a national road system, a national observatory and a national system of weights and measures. He was also accused of being unpatriotic because his wife, Louisa Catherine, was born in London, and of introducing the evil of gambling to the White House because he bought a chess board and a billiard table while he lived there.

Speaking of presidential campaigns, probably the first campaign song was sung in that Adams-Jefferson campaign of 1800. The Adams supporters dredged up an old British drinking song, changed the lyrics and called it "Adams and Liberty." Much to their chagrin after the election the Jefferson people changed the words and called the song "Jefferson and Liberty."

Believe it or not, in 1814 Francis Scott Key wrote a poem about the British bombardment of Fort McHenry in the War of 1812. Some musicologists think that his poem became the lyrics for this same Adams-Jefferson campaign/drinking song, and thus became the melody of "The Star-Spangled Banner, our national anthem. If you think that "The Star-Spangled Banner" melody was the worst campaign song ever used, you are mistaken. Franklin Roosevelt and the Democrats successfully used the song "Happy Days Are Here Again" in the presidential campaigns of 1932, 1936 and 1940. Thomas E. Dewey and the Republicans decided that they needed a campaign song to challenge Roosevelt in the election of 1944. They selected a ragtime song written in 1927

called “What Do You Do On A Dewy Day” and changed Dewy to Dewey. As you can imagine, it was a bust. Instead of dropping the idea, in 1948 they took the old American favorite “Yankee Doodle Dandy”, wrote new lyrics and called it “Yankee Dewey Dandy.” With that kind of strategy, you can see why Dewey and the Republicans lost to Roosevelt in 1944 and again to Truman in 1948.

On the other hand, in the Presidential election of 1928 the Democrats nominated Al Smith, the Governor of New York, to run against Republican Herbert Hoover. Governor Smith was the first Catholic to ever run for President. The Republicans in the evangelical Bible belt states spread the rumor in the campaign that if Governor Smith was elected President the first thing that he would do would be to telegraph the Pope to pack up and move the headquarters of the Catholic Church from Rome to New York City. Believe it or not, this was a very successful tactic and Hoover won the election by a large margin. Governor Smith had a great sense of humor and was known as the “Happy Warrior.” In the first press conference after his defeat, he was asked what he was now going to do. He said that he was going to telegraph the Pope to tell him to unpack

Church Staff and Lay Leaders

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

Board of Governors: Fiona Sankey (President), Jacqueline Rodriguez (Vice-President), Clyde Cortright (Treasurer), Erwin Schaareman (Assistant Treasurer), Patricia Sullivan (Clerk), Karl DeBisschop (Stewardship), Claire Fitzmaurice (Social Justice Action), Jamie Grassmann (Communications), Marie-Louise Jackson-Miller (Congregational Life), Peter Kovach and Andrew Carleen (Religious Education), Open (Worship Committee)

Congregational Committees: Ann Marie Willer (Committee on Ministry), Patricia Sullivan (Nominating Committee)

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